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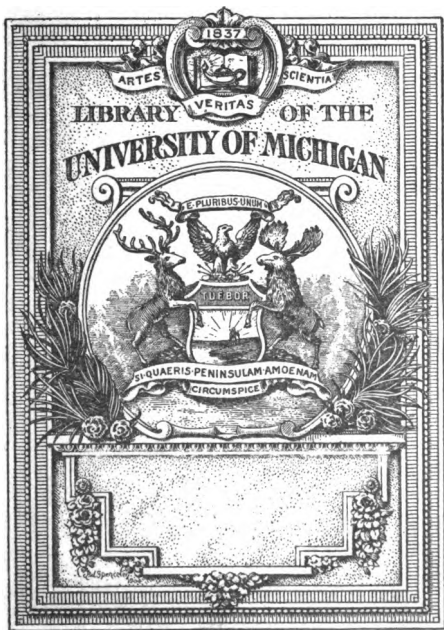
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**WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS
SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE
DEATH OF EACH WRITER.**

VOL. XV.—EDWARD GIBBON.

**LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN**

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ

COMPOSED BY HIMSELF,
AND ILLUSTRATED BY AND FROM HIS LETTERS AND
JOURNAL;

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND NARRATIVE

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN LORD SHEFFIELD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON, 1827.
PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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SEQUEL
TO THE
LIFE OF EDWARD GIBBON.

LETTERS RESUMED.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE HON. MISS HOLROYD.

Lausanne, 9th Nov. 1791.

GULLIVER is made to say, in presenting his interpreter, "My tongue is in the mouth of my friend." Allow me to say, with proper expressions and excuses, "My pen is in the hand of my friend;" and the aforesaid friend begs leave thus to continue.*

I remember to have read somewhere in Rousseau, of a lover quitting very often his mistress, to have the pleasure of corresponding with her. Though not absolutely your lover, I am very much your admirer, and should be extremely tempted to follow the same example. The spirit and reason which prevail in your conversation appear to great advantage in your letters. The three which I have received from Berne,

* The remainder of the letter was dictated by Mr Gibbon, and written by M. Wilh. de Severy. S.

W

Coblentz, and Brussels, have given me much real pleasure; first, as a proof that you are always thinking of me; secondly, as an evidence that you are capable of keeping a resolution; and thirdly, from their own intrinsic merit and entertainment. The style, without any allowance for haste or hurry, is perfectly correct; the manner is neither too light nor too grave; the dimensions neither too long nor too short: they are such, in a word, as I should like to receive from the daughter of my best friend. I attend your lively journal through bad roads and worse mns. Your description of men and manners conveys very satisfactory information, and I am particularly delighted with your remark concerning the irregular behaviour of the Rhine. But the Rhine, alas! after some temporary wanderings, will be content to flow in his old channel, while man—man is the greatest fool of the whole creation.

I direct this letter to Sheffield place, where I suppose you arrived in health and safety. I congratulate my lady on her quiet establishment by her fire-side: and hope you will be able, after all your excursions, to support the climate and manners of old England. Before this epistle reaches you, I hope to have received the two promised letters from Dover and Sheffield place. If they should not meet with a proper return, you will pity and forgive me. I have not yet heard from lord Sheffield, who seems to have devolved on his daughter the task which she has so gloriously executed. I shall probably not write to him till I have received his first letter of business from England; but with regard to my lady I have most excellent intentions.

I never could understand how two persons of such superior merit as miss Holroyd and miss Lausanne, could have so little relish for one another as they appeared to have in the beginning; and it was with great delight that I observed the degrees of their growing intimacy, and the mutual regret of their

separation. Whatever you may imagine, your friends at Lausanne have been thinking as frequently of yourself and company as you could possibly think of them; and you will be very ungrateful if you do not seriously resolve to make them a second visit, under such name and title as you may judge most agreeable. None of the Severy family, except perhaps my secretary, are inclined to forget you; and I am continually asked for some account of your health, motions, and amusements. Since your departure no great events have occurred. I have made a short excursion to Geneva and Copet, and found Mr Necker in much better spirits than when you saw him. They pressed me to pass some weeks this winter in their house at Geneva; and I may possibly comply, at least in part, with their invitation. The aspect of Lausanne is peaceful and placid; and you have no hopes of a revolution driving me out of this country. We hear nothing of the proceedings of the commission,* except by playing at cards every evening with monsieur Fischer, who often speaks of lord Sheffield with esteem and respect. There is no appearance of Rosset and La Motte being brought to a speedy trial, and they still remain in the castle of Chillon, which (according to the geography of the National Assem-

* A commission, at the head of which was monsieur Fischer, one of the principal members of the government of Berne, a very active and intelligent man, who would have distinguished himself in the administration of any country. This commission, which was accompanied by two or three thousand of the best of the German militia of the canton of Berne, was sent for the purpose of examining into some attempts to introduce the French revolutionary principles into the Pays de Vaud. Several persons were seized; the greater part were released; the examination was secret, but Rosset and La Motte were confined in the castle of Chillon; and being afterwards condemned, for correspondence with the French, to a long imprisonment, were transferred to the castle of Arbourg, from whence they escaped. S.

bly) is washed by the sea. Our winter begins with great severity; and we shall not probably have many balls, which, as you may imagine, I lament much. Angletine does not consider two French words as a letter. Montrond sighs and blushes whenever Louisa's name is mentioned: Philippine wishes to converse with her on men and manners. The French ladies are settled in town for the winter, and they form, with Mrs Trevor, a very agreeable addition to our society. It is now enlivened by a visit of the chevalier de Boufflers, one of the most accomplished men in the *ci-devant* kingdom of France.

As Mrs Wood,* who has miscarried, is about to leave us, I must either cure or die; and, upon the whole, I believe the former will be most expedient. You will see her in London with dear Corea next winter. My rival magnificently presents me with an hogshead of Madeira, so that in honour I could not supplant him: yet I do assure you, from my heart, that another departure is much more painful to me. The apartment below† is shut up, and I know not when I shall again visit it with pleasure. Adieu. Believe me, one and all, most affectionately yours.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD
SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, December 28, 1791.

ALAS! alas! the dæmon of procrastination has again possessed me. Three months have nearly rolled away since your departure; and seven letters, five from the most valuable Maria, and two from yourself, have extorted from me only a single epistle, which perhaps would never have been written, had I not used the permission of employing my own tongue and the hand of a secretary. Shall I tell you that, for these

* Madame de Silva.

† The apartment principally inhabited during the residence of my family at Lausanne. S.

last six weeks, the eve of every day has witnessed a *firm* resolution, and the day itself has furnished some ingenious delay? This morning, for instance, I determined to invade you as soon as the breakfast things should be removed: they were removed; but I had something to read, to write, to meditate, and there was time enough before me. Hour after hour has stolen away, and I finally begin my letter at two o'clock, evidently too late for the post, as I must dress, dine, go abroad, &c. A foundation however *shall be laid*, which shall stare me in the face; and next Saturday I shall probably be roused by the awful reflection that it is the last day in the year.

After realizing this summer an event which I had long considered as a dream of fancy, I know not whether I should rejoice or grieve at your visit to Lausanne. While I possessed the family, the sentiment of pleasure highly predominated; when, just as we had subsided into a regular, easy, comfortable plan of life, the last trump sounded, and, without speaking of the pang of separation, you left me to one of the most gloomy, solitary, months of October which I have ever passed. For yourself and daughters however you have contrived to snatch some of the most interesting scenes of this world. Paris, at such a moment, Switzerland, and the Rhine, Strasburg, Coblenz, have suggested a train of lively images and useful ideas, which will not be speedily erased. The mind of the young damsel more especially will be enlarged and enlightened in every sense. In four months she has lived many years; and she will much deceive and displease me, if she does not review and methodise her journal, in such a manner as she is capable of performing, for the amusement of her particular friends. Another benefit which will rebound from your recent view is, that every place, person, and object, about Lausanne are now become familiar and interesting to you. In our future correspondence (do I dare pronounce the word correspon-

dence?) I can talk to you as freely of every circumstance as if it were actually before your eyes. And first, of my own improvements.—All those venerable piles of ancient verdure which you *admired*, have been eradicated in one fatal day. Your faithful substitutes, William de Severy and Levade, have never ceased to persecute me till I signed their death-warrant. Their place is now supplied by a number of picturesque naked poles, the foster-fathers of as many twigs of *Platanusses*, which may afford a grateful but distant shade to the founder, or to his *seris Nepotibus*. In the meanwhile I must confess that the terrace appears broader, and that I discover a much larger quantity of snow than I should otherwise do. The workmen admire your ingenious plan for cutting out a new bed-chamber and book-room; but, on mature consideration, we all unanimously prefer the old scheme of adding a third room on the terrace beyond the library, with two spacious windows, and a fire-place between. It will be larger (28 feet by 21) and pleasanter, and warmer: the difference of expense will be much less considerable than I imagined: the door of communication with the library will be artfully buried in the wainscot; and, unless it be opened by my own choice, may always remain a profound secret. Such is the design; but, as it will not be executed before next summer, you have time and liberty to state your objections. I am much colder about the staircase; but it may be finished, according to your idea, for thirty pounds; and I feel they will persuade me. Am I not a very rich man? When these alterations are completed, few authors of six volumes in quarto will be more agreeably lodged than myself. *Lausanne* is now full and lively; all our native families are returned from the country; and, praised be the Lord! we are infested with few foreigners, either French or English. Even our democrats are more reasonable or more discreet; it is agreed to waive the subject of politics, and all seem happy and cordial. I

have a grand dinner this week, a supper of thirty or forty people on Twelfth-day, &c.; some concerts have taken place, some balls are talked of; and even Maria would allow (yet it is ungenerous to say even Maria) that the winter scene at Lausanne is tolerably gay and active. I say nothing of the Severys, as Angletine has epistolized Maria last post. She has probably hinted that her brother meditates a short excursion to Turin: that worthy fellow Trevor has given him a pressing invitation to his own house. In the beginning of February I propose going to Geneva for three or four weeks. I shall lodge and eat with the Neckers; my mornings will be my own; and I shall spend my evenings in the society of the place, where I have many acquaintance. This short absence will agitate my stagnant life, and restore me with fresh appetite to my house, my library, and my friends. Before that time (the end of February) what events may happen, or be ready to happen! The National Assembly (compared to which the former was a senate of heroes and demi-gods) seen resolved to attack Germany *avec quatre millions de bayonettes libres*; the army of the princes must soon either fight, or starve, or conquer. Will Sweden draw his sword? Will Russia draw her purse? an empty purse! All is darkness and anarchy: neither party is strong enough to oppose a settlement; and I cannot see a possibility of an amicable arrangement, where there are no heads (in any sense of the word) who can answer for the multitude. Send me your ideas, and those of lord Guildford, lord Loughborough, Fox, &c.

Before I conclude, a word of my vexatious affairs. Shall I never sail on the smooth stream of good security and half-yearly interest? Will everybody refuse my money? I had already written to Darrel and Gosling to obey your commands, and was in hopes that you had already made large and salutary evacuations. During your absence I never expected much effect from the cold indifference of agents; but you are now in England—you will be

speedily in London: set all your setting-dogs to beat the field; hunt, inquire; why should you not advertise? Yet I am almost ashamed to complain of some stagnation of interest, when I am witness to the natural and acquired philosophy of so many French who are reduced from riches, not to indigence, but to absolute want and beggary. A count Argout has just left us, who has possessed ten thousand a-year in the island of St Domingo; he is utterly burnt and ruined; and a brother, whom he tenderly loved, has been murdered by the negroes. These are real misfortunes. I have much revolved the plan of the *Memoirs* I once mentioned, and, as you do not think it ridiculous, I believe I shall make an attempt: if I can please myself, I am confident of not displeasing; but let this be a profound secret between us: people must not be prepared to laugh—they must be taken by surprise. Have you looked over your, or rather my, letters? Surely, in the course of the year, you may find a safe and cheap occasion of sending me a parcel; they may assist me. Adieu. I embrace my lady; send me a favourable account of her health. I kiss the Marmaille. By an amazing push of remorse and diligence I have finished my letter (three pages and a half) this same day since dinner; but I have not time to read it. Ever yours.

Half past six.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, December 31, 1791.

To-morrow a new year, *multos et felices*.

I now most sincerely repent of my late repentance, and do almost swear never to renounce the amiable and useful practice of procrastination. Had I delayed, as I was strongly tempted, another post, your missive of the 13th, which did not reach me till this morning, (three mails were due,) would have arrived in time, and I might have avoided this second Herculean labour. It will be, however, no more than an infant

Hereules. The topics of conversation have been fully discussed, and I shall now confine myself to the needful of the new business. *Felix faustumque sit!* May no untoward accident disarrange your Yorkshire mortgage; the conclusion of which will place me in a clear and easy state, such as I have never known since the first hour of property. * * * *

The three per cents are so high, and the country is in such a damned state of prosperity under that fellow Pitt, that it goes against me to purchase at such low interest. In my visit to England next autumn, or in the spring following, (alas! you *must* acquiesce in the alternative,) I hope to be armed with sufficient materials to draw a sum which may be employed as taste or fancy shall dictate, in the improvement of my library, a service of plate, &c. I am not very sanguine, but surely this is no uncomfortable prospect. This pecuniary detail, which has not indeed been so unpleasant as it used formerly to be, has carried me farther than I expected. I rejoice in Lally's prosperity. Have you reconsidered my proposal of a declaration of constitutional principles from the heads of the party? I think a foolish address from a body of Whigs to the National Assembly renders it still more incumbent on you. Achieve my worldly concerns, *et eris mihi magnus Apollo*. Adieu, ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, April 4th, 1792.

FOR fear you should abuse me, as usual, I will begin the attack, and scold at you for not having yet sent me the long expected intelligence of the completion of my mortgage. *Cospetto di Baccho!* for I must ease myself by swearing a little. What is the cause, the meaning, the pretence, of this delay? Are the Yorkshire mortgagers inconstant in their wishes? Are the London lawyers constant in their procrastination? Is a letter on the road to inform me that all

is concluded, or to tell me that all is broken to pieces? Had the money been placed in the three per cents last May, besides the annual-interest, it would have gained by the rise of stock nearly twenty per cent. Your lordship is a wise man, a successful writer, and an useful senator; you understand America and Ireland, corn and slaves; but your prejudice against the funds,* in which I am often tempted to join, makes you a little blind to their increasing value in the hands of our virtuous and excellent minister. But our regret is vain; one pull more, and we reach the shore; and our future correspondence will be no longer tainted with business. Shall I then be more diligent and regular? I hope and believe so; for now that I have got over this article of worldly interest, my letter seems to be almost finished. *Apropos* of letters, am I not a sad dog to forget my lady and Maria? Alas! the dual number has been prejudicial to both. "How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away!" I am like the ass of famous memory; I cannot tell which way to turn first, and there I stand mute and immovable. The baronial and maternal dignity of my lady, supported by twenty years friendship, may claim the preference. But the five incomparable letters of Maria!—Next week, however—Am I not ashamed to talk of next week?

I have most successfully, and most agreeably, executed my plan of spending the month of March at Geneva in the Necker-house, and every circumstance that I had arranged turned out beyond my expectation; the freedom of the morning; the society of the table and drawing room, from half an hour past two till six or seven; an evening assembly and card-party in a round of the best company; and, excepting one day in the week, a private supper of free and friendly conversation. You would like Geneva better than

* It would be more correct if he had only stated my preference of landed to all other property. S.

Lausanne; there is much more information to be got among the men; but, though I found some agreeable women, their manners and style of life are upon the whole less easy and pleasant than our own. I was much pleased with Necker's brother, Mr de Germany, a good-humoured, polite, sensible man, without the genius and fame of the statesman, but much more adapted for private and ordinary happiness. Madame de Staël is expected in a few weeks at Copet, where they receive her, and where, "to dumb forgetfulness a prey," she will have leisure to regret "the pleasing anxious being" which she enjoyed amidst the storms of Paris. But what can the poor creature do? Her husband is in Sweden, her lover is no longer secretary at war, and her father's house is the only place where she can reside with the least degree of prudence and decency. Of that father I have really a much higher idea than I ever had before; in our domestic intimacy he cast away his gloom and reserve; I saw a great deal of his mind, and all that I saw is fair and worthy. He was overwhelmed by the hurricane, he mistook his way in the fog; but in such a perilous situation I much doubt whether any mortal could have seen or stood. In the meanwhile, he is abused by all parties, and none of the French in Geneva will set their foot in his house. He remembers lord Sheffield with esteem; his health is good, and he would be tranquil in his private life, were not his spirits continually wounded by the arrival of every letter and every newspaper. His sympathy is deeply interested by the fatal consequences of a revolution in which he had acted so leading a part; and he feels as a friend for the danger of M. de Lessart, who may be guilty in the eyes of the Jacobins, or even of his judges, by those very actions and dispatches which would be most approved by all the lovers of his country. What a momentous event is the emperor's death! In the forms of a new reign, and of the imperial election, the democrats have at least gained time, if they

knew how to use it. But the new monarch, though of a weak complexion, is of a martial temper; he loves the soldiers, and is beloved by them; and the slow fluctuating politics of his uncle may be succeeded by a direct line of march to the gates of Strasbourg and Paris. It is the opinion of the master-movers in France, (I know it most certainly,) that their troops will not fight, that the people have lost all sense of patriotism, and that on the first discharge of an Austrian cannon, the game is up. But what occasion for Austrians or Spaniards? The French are themselves their greatest enemies; four thousand Marseillois are marched against Arles and Avignon, the *troupes de ligne* are divided between the two parties, and the flame of civil war will soon extend over the southern provinces. You have heard of the unworthy treatment of the Swiss regiment of Ernest. The canton of Berne has bravely recalled them, with a stout letter to the king of France, which must be inserted in all the papers. I now come to the most unpleasant article, our home politics. Rosset and La Motte are condemned to five and twenty years imprisonment in the fortress of Arbourg. We have not yet received their official sentence, nor is it believed that the proofs and proceedings against them will be published; an awkward circumstance, which it does not seem easy to justify. Some (though none of note) are taken up, several are fled, many more are suspected and suspicious. All are silent, but it is the silence of fear and discontent; and the secret hatred which rankled against government begins to point against the few who are known to be well-affected. I never knew any place so much changed as Lausanne, even since last year; and though you will not be much obliged to me for the motive, I begin very seriously to think of visiting Sheffield place by the month of September next. Yet here again I am frightened by the dangers of a French, and the difficulties of a German, route. You must

send me an account of the passage from Dieppe to Brighton, with an itinerary of the Rhine, distances, expenses, &c. As usual, I just save the post; nor have I time to read my letter, which, after wasting the morning in deliberation, has been struck off in a heat since dinner. The views of Sheffield place are just received; they are admired, and shall be framed. Severy has spent the carnival at Turin. Trevor is only the best man in the world.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, May 30th, 1792.

AFTER the receipt of your *penultimate*, eight days ago, I expected, with much impatience, the arrival of your next promised epistle. It arrived this morning, but has not completely answered my expectations. I wanted, and I hoped for, a full and fair picture of the present and probable aspect of your political world, with which, at this distance, I seem every day less satisfied. In the slave question you triumphed last session; in this you have been defeated. What is the cause of this alteration? If it proceeded only from an impulse of humanity, I cannot be displeased, even with an error; since it is very likely that my own vote (had I possessed one) would have been added to the majority. But in this rage against slavery, in the numerous petitions against the slave trade, was there no leaven of new democratical principles? no wild ideas of the rights and natural equality of man? It is these I fear. Some articles in newspapers, some pamphlets of the year, the Jacobin Club, have fallen into my hands. I do not infer much from such publications; yet I have never known them of so black and malignant a cast. I shuddered at Grey's motion; disliked the half-support of Fox, admired the firmness of Pitt's declaration, and excused the usual intemperance of Burke. Surely such men as ****, *****, *****, have talents for mischief. I see a club of

reform which contains some respectable names. Inform me of the professions, the principles, the plans, the resources, of these reformers. Will they heat the minds of the people? Does the French democracy gain no ground? Will the bulk of your party stand firm to their own interest, and that of their country? Will you not take some active measures to declare your sound opinions, and separate yourselves from your rotten members? If you allow them to perplex government, if you trifle with this solemn business, if you do not resist the spirit of innovation in the first attempt, if you admit the smallest and most specious change in our parliamentary system, you are lost. You will be driven from one step to another—from principles just in theory, to consequences most pernicious in practice; and your first concessions will be productive of every subsequent mischief, for which you will be answerable to your country and posterity. Do not suffer yourselves to be lulled into a false security; remember the proud fabric of the French monarchy! Not four years ago it stood founded, as it might seem, on the rock of time, force, and opinion, supported by the triple aristocracy of the church, the nobility, and the parliaments. They are crumbled into dust; they are vanished from the earth. If this tremendous warning has no effect on the men of property in England, if it does not open every eye, and raise every arm, you will deserve your fate. If I am too precipitate, enlighten—if I am too desponding, encourage me.

My pen has run into this argument; for, as much a foreigner as you think me, on this momentous subject I am an Englishman.

The pleasure of residing at Sheffield place is, after all, the first and the ultimate object of my visit to my native country. But when or how will that visit be effected? Clouds and whirlwinds, Austrian Croats and Gallic cannibals, seem on every side to impede my passage. You appear to apprehend the perils

or difficulties of the German road, and French peace is more sanguinary than civilized war. I must pass through, perhaps, a thousand republics or municipalities, which neither obey nor are obeyed. The strictness of passports, and the popular ferment, are much increased since last summer: aristocrate is in every mouth, lanterns hang in every street, and an hasty word, or a casual resemblance, may be fatal. Yet, on the other hand, it is probable that many English, men, women, and children, will traverse the country without any accident before next September; and I am sensible that many things appear more formidable at a distance than on a nearer approach. Without any absolute determination, we must see what the events of the next three or four months will produce. In the meanwhile I shall expect with impatience your next letter: let it be speedy: my answer shall be prompt.

You will be glad, or sorry, to learn that my gloomy apprehensions are much abated, and that my departure, whenever it takes place, will be an act of choice, rather than of necessity. I do not pretend to affirm, that secret discontent, dark suspicion, private animosity, are very materially assuaged; but we have not experienced, nor do we now apprehend any dangerous acts of violence, which may compel me to seek a refuge among the friendly Bears,* and to abandon my library to the mercy of the democrats. The firmness and vigour of government have crushed, at least for a time, the spirit of innovation; and I do not believe that the body of the people, especially the peasants, are disposed for a revolution. From France, praised be the *dæmon* of anarchy! the insurgents of the Pays de Vaud could not at present have much to hope; and should the *gardes nationales*, of which there is little appearance, attempt an incursion, the country is armed and prepared, and they would be

* Berne

resisted with equal numbers and superior discipline. The Gallic wolves that prowled round Geneva are drawn away, some to the south and some to the north; and the late events in Flanders seem to have diffused a general contempt, as well as abhorrence, for the lawless savages who fly before the enemy, hang their prisoners, and murder their officers. The brave and patient regiment of Ernest is expected home every day; and as Berne will take them into present pay, that veteran and regular corps will add to the security of our frontier.

I rejoice that we have so little to say on the subject of worldly affairs. This summer we are threatened with an inundation, besides many nameless English and Irish; but I am anxious for the duchess of Devonshire and the lady Elizabeth Foster, who are on their march. Lord Malmsbury, the *audacieux* Harris, will inform you that he has seen me: *him* I would have consented to keep.

One word more before we part: call upon Mr John Nicholls, bookseller and printer, at Cicero's Head, Red Lion passage, Fleet street, and ask him whether he did not, about the beginning of March, receive a very polite letter from Mr Gibbon of Lausanne? To which, either as a man of business or a civil gentleman, he should have returned an answer. My application related to a domestic article in the Gentleman's Magazine of August 1788, (p. 698,) which had lately fallen into my hands, and concerning which I requested some farther lights. Mrs Moss delivered the letters* into my hands, but I doubt whether they will be of much service to me; the work appears far more difficult in the execution than in the idea; and as I am now taking my leave for some time of the library, I shall not make much progress in the memoirs of P. P. till I am on English

* His letters to me for a certain period, which he desired me to send, to assist him in writing his Memoirs. S.

ground. But is it indeed true, that I shall eat any Sussex pheasants this autumn? The event is in the book of Fate, and I cannot unroll the leaves of September and October. Should I reach Sheffield place, I hope to find the whole family in a perfect state of existence, except a certain Maria Holroyd, my fair and *generous* correspondent, whose annihilation on proper terms I most fervently desire. I must receive a copious answer before the end of next month, June, and again call upon you for a map of your political world. The chancellor roars: does he break his chain? *Vale*.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, August 23, 1792.

WHEN I inform you that the design of my English expedition is at last postponed till another year, you will not be much surprised. The public obstacles, the danger of one road, and the difficulties of another, would alone be sufficient to arrest so unwieldy and inactive a being; and these obstacles on the side of France are growing every day more insuperable. On the other hand, the terrors which might have driven me from hence have, in a great measure, subsided. Our state-prisoners are forgotten: the country begins to recover its old good humour and unsuspecting confidence; and the last revolution of Paris appears to have convinced almost everybody of the fatal consequences of democratical principles, which lead by a path of flowers into the abyss of hell. I may therefore wait with patience and tranquillity till the duke of Brunswick shall have opened the French road. But if I am not driven from Lausanne, you will ask, I hope with some indignation, whether I am not drawn to England, and more especially to Sheffield place? The desire of embracing you and yours is now the strongest, and must gradually become the sole, inducement that can force me from my library and garden, over seas and mountains. The English

world will forget and be forgotten and every year will deprive me of some acquaintance, who by courtesy are styled friends: lord Guildford and sir Joshua Reynolds! two of the men, and two of the houses in London, on whom I the most relied for the comforts of society.

September 12th, 1792.

Thus far had I written in the full confidence of finishing and sending my letter the next post; but six post-days have unaccountably slipped away, and were you not accustomed to my silence, you would almost begin to think me on the road. How dreadfully, since my last date, has the French road been polluted with blood; and what horrid scenes may be acting at this moment, and may still be aggravated, till the duke of Brunswick is master of Paris! On every rational principle of calculation he must succeed; yet sometimes, when my spirits are low, I dread the blind efforts of mad and desperate multitudes fighting on their own ground. A few days or weeks must decide the military operations of this year, and perhaps for ever; but on the fairest supposition, I cannot look forwards to any firm settlement, either of a legal or an absolute government. I cannot pretend to give you any Paris news. Should I inform you, as we believe, that *Lally is still among the cannibals*, you would possibly answer, that he is now sitting in the library at Sheffield. Madame de Stael, after miraculously escaping through pikes and poignards, has reached the castle of Copet, where I shall see her before the end of the week. If anything can provoke the king of Sardinia and the Swiss, it must be the foul destruction of *his cousin* madame de Lamballe, and of *their* regiment of guards. An extraordinary council

ned at Berne, *but resentment may be checked*

In spite of Maria's laughter, I applaud
tion, and sigh for a hearty union of all
l property of the country. The times



require it; but your last political letter was a cordial to my spirits. The duchess of Devonshire rather dislikes a coalition: amiable creature! The Eliza is furious against you for not writing. We shall lose them in a few days; but the motions of the Eliza and the duchess for Italy or England are doubtful. Ladies Spencer and Duncannon certainly pass the Alps. I live with them. Adieu. Since I do not appear in person, I feel the absolute propriety of writing to my lady and Maria; but there is far from the knowledge to the performance of a duty. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, October 5th, 1792.

As our English newspapers must have informed you of the invasion of Savoy by the French, and as it is possible that you have some trifling apprehensions of my *being killed and eaten by those cannibals*, it has appeared to me that a short extraordinary dispatch might not be unacceptable on this occasion. It is indeed true, that about ten days ago the French army of the South, under the command of M. de Montesquiou, (if any French army can be said to be under any command,) entered Savoy, and possessed themselves of Chamberry, Montmelian, and several other places. It has always been the practice of the king of Sardinia to abandon his transalpine dominions; but on this occasion the court of Turin appears to have been surprised by the strange eccentric motions of a democracy, which always acts from the passion of the moment; and their inferior troops have retreated, with some loss and disgrace, into the passes of the Alps. Mount Cenis is now impervious, and our English travellers who are bound for Italy, the duchess of Devonshire, Ancaster, &c., will be forced to explore a long circuitous road through the Tyrol. But the Chablais is yet intact, nor can our telescopes

discover the tricolor banners on the other side of the lake. Our accounts of the French numbers seem to vary from fifteen to thirty thousand men; the regulars are few, but they are followed by a rabble rout, which must soon however melt away, as they will find no plunder, and scanty subsistence, in the poverty and barrenness of Savoy. N.B. I have just seen a letter from Mr de Montesquiou, who boasts that at his first entrance into Savoy he had only twelve battalions. Our intelligence is far from correct.

The magistrates of Geneva were alarmed by this dangerous neighbourhood, and more especially by the well-known animosity of an exiled citizen, Claviere, who is one of the six ministers of the French republic. It was carried by a small majority in the General Council, to call in the succour of three thousand Swiss, which is stipulated by ancient treaty. The strongest reason or pretence of the minority was founded on the danger of provoking the French; and they seem to have been justified by the event, since the complaint of the French resident amounts to a declaration of war. The fortifications of Geneva are not contemptible, especially on the side of Savoy; and it is much doubted whether Mr de Montesquiou is prepared for a regular siege; but the malcontents are numerous within the walls, and I question whether the spirit of the citizens will hold out against a bombardment. In the meanwhile the diet has declared that the first cannon fired against Geneva will be considered as an act of hostility against the whole Helvetic body. Berne, as the nearest and most powerful canton, has taken the lead with great vigour and vigilance; the road is filled with the perpetual succession of troops and artillery; and, if some disaffection lurks in the towns, the peasants, especially the Germans, are inflamed with a strong desire of encountering the murderers of their countrymen. Mr de Watteville, with whom you dined at my house last year, refused to accept the command of the Swiss

succour of Geneva, till it was made his first instruction that he should never, in any case, surrender himself prisoner of war.

In this situation, you may suppose that we have some fears. I have great dependence, however, on the many chances in our favour, the valour of the Swiss, the return of the Piedmontese with their Austrian allies, eight or ten thousand men from the Milanese, a diversion from Spain, the great events (how slowly they proceed) on the side of Paris, the inconstancy and want of discipline of the French, and the near approach of the winter season. I am not nervous, but I will not be rash. It will be painful to abandon my house and library; but if the danger should approach, I will retreat before it, first to Berne, and gradually to the north. Should I even be forced to take refuge in England, (a violent measure so late in the year,) you would perhaps receive me as kindly as you do the French priests—a noble act of hospitality! Could I have foreseen this storm, I would have been there six weeks ago: but who can foresee the wild measures of the savages of Gaul? We thought ourselves perfectly out of the hurricane latitudes. Adieu. I am going to bed, and must rise early to visit the Neckers at Rolle, whither they have retired from the frontier situation of Copet. Severy is on horseback with his dragoons: his poor father is dangerously ill. It will be shocking if it should be found necessary to remove him. While we are in this very awkward crisis, I will write at least every week. Ever yours. Write instantly, and remember all my commissions.

TO THE SAME.

I WILL keep my promise of sending you a weekly journal of our troubles, that, when the piping times of peace are restored, I may sleep in long and irreproachable silence: but I shall use a smaller paper, as

our military exploits will seldom be sufficient to fill the ample size of our English quarto.

October 13, 1792.

Since my last of the 6th, our attack is not more imminent, and our defence is most assuredly stronger; two very important circumstances at a time when every day is leading us, though not so fast as our impatience could wish, towards the unwarlike month of November; and we observe with pleasure that the troops of Mr de Montesquiou, which are chiefly from the southern provinces, will not cheerfully entertain the rigour of an Alpine winter. The 7th instant, Mr de Chateauneuf, the French resident, took his leave with an haughty mandate, commanding the Genevois, as they valued their safety and the friendship of the Republic, to dismiss their Swiss allies, and to punish the magistrates who had traiterously proposed the calling in these foreign troops. It is precisely the fable of the wolves, who offered to make peace with the sheep, provided they would send away their dogs. You know what became of the sheep. This demand appears to have kindled a just and general indignation, since it announced an edict of proscription, and must lead to a democratical revolution, which would probably renew the horrid scenes of Paris and Avignon. A general assembly of the citizens was convened, the message was read, speeches were made, oaths were taken, and it was resolved (with only three dissentient voices) to live and die in the defence of their country. The Genevois muster above three thousand well-armed citizens; and the Swiss, who may easily be increased (in a few hours) to an equal number, add spirit to the timorous, and confidence to the well-affected: their arsenals are filled with arms, their magazines with ammunition, and their granaries with corn. But their fortifications are extensive and imperfect; they are commanded from two adjacent hills; a French faction lurks in the city; the character

of the Genevois is rather commercial than military, and their behaviour, lofty promise, and base surrender, in the year 1782, is fresh in our memories. In the meanwhile four thousand French at the most are arrived in the neighbouring camp, nor is there yet any appearance of mortars or heavy artillery. Perhaps an haughty menace may be repelled by a firm countenance. If it were worth while talking of justice, what a shameful attack of a feeble, unoffending state ! On the news of their danger, all Switzerland, from Schaffhausen to the Pays de Vaud, has risen in arms ; and a French resident, who has passed through the country in his way from Ratisbon, declares his intention of informing and admonishing the national convention. About eleven thousand Bernois are already posted in the neighbourhood of Copet and Nyon ; and new reinforcements of men, artillery, &c. arrive every day. Another army is drawn together to oppose M. de Ferrieres on the side of Bienne and the bishopric of Basle ; and the Austrians in Swabia would be easily persuaded to cross the Rhine in our defence. But we are yet ignorant whether our sovereigns mean to wage an offensive or defensive war. If the latter, which is more likely, will the French begin the attack ? Should Geneva yield to fear or force, this country is open to an invasion ; and though our men are brave, we want generals ; and I despise the French much less than I did two months ago. It should seem that our hopes from the king of Sardinia, and the Austrians of Milan, are faint and distant ; Spain sleeps ; and the duke of Brunswick (amazement !) seems to have failed in his great project. For my part, till Geneva falls, I do not think of a retreat ; but, at all events, I am provided with two strong horses, and an hundred louis in gold. Zurich would be probably my winter quarters, and the society of the Neckers would make any place agreeable. Their situation is worse than mine : I have no daughter ready to lie in ; nor do I fear the French aristocrats

on the road. Adieu. Keep my letters ; excuse contradictions and repetitions. The duchess of Devonshire leaves us next week. Lady Elizabeth abhors you. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

October 20, 1792.

SINCE my last our affairs take a more pacific turn ; but I will not venture to affirm that our peace will be either safe or honourable. Mr de Montesquiou and three commissioners of the convention, who are at Carrouge, have had frequent conferences with the magistrates of Geneva ; several expresses have been dispatched to and from Paris, and every step of the negociation is communicated to the deputies of Bern and Zurich. The French troops observe a very tolerable degree of order and discipline ; and no act of hostility has yet been committed on the territory of Geneva.

October 27.

My usual temper very readily admitted the excuse, that it would be better to wait another week, till the final settlement of our affairs. The treaty is signed between France and Geneva ; and the ratification of the convention is looked upon as assured, if anything can be assured in that wild democracy. On condition that the Swiss garrison, with the approbation of Berne and Zurich, be recalled before the first of December, it is stipulated that the independence of Geneva shall be preserved inviolate ; that Mr de Montesquiou shall immediately send away his heavy artillery ; and that no French troops shall approach within ten leagues of the city. As the Swiss have acted only as auxiliaries, they have no occasion for a direct treaty ; but they cannot prudently disarm till they are satisfied of the pacific intentions of France ; and no such satisfaction can be given till they have acknowledged the new republic, which they will probably do in a few days with a deep groan of indig-

nation and sorrow : it has been cemented with the blood of their countrymen ! But when the emperor, the king of Prussia, the first general and the first army in Europe, have failed, less powerful states may acquiesce, without dishonour, in the determination of fortune. Do you understand this most unexpected failure ? I will allow an ample share to the badness of the roads and the weather, to famine and disease, to the skill of Dumouriez, a heaven-born general ! and to the enthusiastic ardour of the new Romans ; but still, still there must be some secret and shameful cause at the bottom of this strange retreat. We are now delivered from the impending terrors of siege and invasion. The Geneva *émigrés*, particularly the Neckers, are hastening to their homes ; and I shall not be reduced to the hard necessity of seeking a winter asylum at Zurich or Constance : but I am not pleased with our future prospects. It is much to be feared that the present government of Geneva will be soon modelled after the French fashion ; the new republic of Savoy is forming on the opposite bank of the lake ; the Jacobin missionaries are powerful and zealous ; and the malcontents of this country, who begin again to rear their heads, will be surrounded with temptations, and examples, and allies. I know not whether the Pays de Vaud will long adhere to the dominion of Berne ; or whether I shall be permitted to end my days in this little paradise, which I have so happily suited to my taste and circumstances.

Last Monday only I received your letter, which had strangely loitered on the road since its date of the 29th of September. There must surely be some disorder in the posts, since the Eliza departed indignant at never having heard from you.

I am much indebted to Mr Nichols for his genealogical communications, which I am impatient to receive ; but I do not understand why so civil a gentleman could not favour me, in six months, with an answer by the post : since he entrusts me with

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these valuable papers, you have not, I presume, informed him of my negligence and awkwardness in regard to manuscripts. Your reproach rather surprises me, as I suppose I am much the same as I have been for these last twenty years. Should you hold your resolution of writing only such things as may be published at Charing cross, our future correspondence would not be very interesting. But I expect and require, at this important crisis, a full and confidential account of your views concerning England, Ireland, and France. You have a strong and clear eye; and your pen is, perhaps, the most useful quill that ever has been plucked from a goose. Your protection of the French refugees is highly applauded. Rosset and La Motte have escaped from Arbourgh, perhaps with connivance, to avoid disagreeable demands from the republic. Adieu. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

November 10, 1792.

RECEIVED this day, November 9th, a most amiable dispatch from the too humble secretary* of the family of Espee,† dated October 24th, which I answer the same day. It will be acknowledged that I have fulfilled my engagements with as much accuracy as our uncertain state and the fragility of human nature would allow. I resume my narrative. At the time when we imagined that all was settled, by an equal treaty between two such unequal powers as the Geneva flea and the French leviathan, we were thunderstruck with the intelligence that the ministers of the republic refused to ratify the conditions: and they were indignant, with some colour of reason, at the hard obligation of withdrawing their troops to the distance of ten leagues, and of consequently leaving the Pays de Gez naked, and exposed to the Swiss,

Miss Holroyd.

† Meaning Sheffield place.

who had assembled 15,000 men on the frontier, and with whom they had not made any agreement. The messenger who was sent last Sunday from Geneva is not yet returned; and many persons are afraid of some design and danger in this delay. Montesquiou has acted with politeness, moderation, and apparent sincerity; but he may resign, he may be superseded, his place may be occupied by an *enragé*, by Servan, or prince Charles of Hesse, who would aspire to imitate the predatory fame of Custine in Germany. In the meanwhile the general holds a wolf by the ears; an officer who has seen his troops, about 18,000 men (with a tremendous train of artillery) represents them as a black, daring, desperate crew of buccaneers, rather shocking than contemptible; the officers (scarcely a gentleman among them) without servants, or horses, or baggage, lying *higgledy-piggledy* on the ground with the common men, yet maintaining a rough kind of discipline over them. They already begin to accuse and even to suspect their general, and call aloud for blood and plunder: could they have an opportunity of squeezing some of the rich citizens, Geneva would cut up as fat as most towns in Europe. During this suspension of hostilities they are permitted to visit the city without arms, sometimes three or four hundred at a time; and the magistrates, as well as the Swiss commander, are by no means pleased with this dangerous intercourse, which they dare not prohibit. Such are our fears: yet it should seem, on the other side, that the French affect a kind of magnanimous justice towards their little neighbour, and that they are not ambitious of an unprofitable contest with the poor and hardy Swiss. The Swiss are not equal to a long and expensive war; and as most of our militia have families and trades, the country already sighs for their return. Whatever can be yielded, without absolute danger or disgrace, will doubtless be granted; and the business will probably end in our owning the sovereignty, and trusting to

the good faith, of the republic of France. How that word would have sounded four years ago! The measure is humiliating; but after the retreat of the duke of Brunswick, and the failure of the Austrians, the smaller powers may acquiesce without dishonour. Every dog has his day; and these Gallic dogs have their day, at least, of most insolent prosperity. After forcing or tempting the Prussians to evacuate their country, they conquer Savoy, pillage Germany, threaten Spain: the Low Countries are ere now invaded; Rome and Italy tremble; they scour the Mediterranean, and talk of sending a squadron into the South Sea. The whole horizon is so black, that I begin to feel some anxiety for England, the last refuge of liberty and law; and the more so, as I perceive from lord Sheffield's last epistle, that his firm nerves are a little shaken: but of this more in my next, for I want to unburden my conscience. If England, with the experience of our happiness and French calamities, should now be seduced to eat the apple of false freedom, we should indeed deserve to be driven from the paradise which we enjoy. I turn aside from the horrid and improbable (yet not impossible) supposition that, in three or four years' time, myself and my best friends may be reduced to the deplorable state of the French emigrants: *they* thought it as impossible three or four years ago. Never did a revolution affect to such a degree the private existence of such numbers of the first people of a great country: your examples of misery I could easily match with similar examples in this country and the neighbourhood; and our sympathy is the deeper, as we do not possess, like you, the means of alleviating, in some degree, the misfortunes of the fugitives. But I must have, from the very excellent pen of the Maria, the tragedy of the archbishop of Arles; and the longer the better. Madame de Biron has probably been tempted by some faint and (I fear) fallacious promises of clemency to the women, and

which have likewise engaged madame d'Aguesseau and her two daughters to revisit France. Madame de Bouillon stands her ground, and her situation as a foreign princess is less exposed. As lord Sheffield has assumed the glorious character of protector of the distressed, his name is pronounced with gratitude and respect. The duke of Richmond is praised on madame de Biron's account. To the princess d'Henin, and Lally, I wish to be remembered. The Neckers cannot venture into Geneva, and madame de Stael will probably lie in at Rolle. He is printing a defence of the king, &c. against their republican judges; but the name of Necker is unpopular to all parties, and I much fear that the guillotine will be more speedy than the press. It will however be an eloquent performance; and if I find an opportunity, I am to send one to you, lord Sheffield, by his particular desire: he wishes likewise to convey some copies with speed to our principal people, Pitt, Fox, lord Stormont, &c. But such is the rapid succession of events, that it will appear, like the 'Pouvoir Exécutif,' his best work, after the whole scene has been totally changed. Ever yours.

P.S. The revolution of France, and my triple dispatch by the same post to Sheffield place, are, in my opinion, the two most singular events in the eighteenth century. I found the task so easy and pleasant, that I had some thoughts of adding a letter to the gentle Louisa. I am this moment informed, that our troops on the frontier are beginning to move on their return home; yet we hear nothing of the treaty's being concluded.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE HON. MISS HOLROYD.

Lausanne, Nov. 10, 1792.

IN dispatching the weekly political journal to lord Sheffield, my conscience (for I have some remains of conscience) most powerfully urges me to salute, with

some lines of friendship and gratitude, the amiable secretary, who might save herself the trouble of a modest apology. I have not yet forgotten our different behaviour after the much-lamented *separation* of October the 4th, 1791,—your meritorious punctuality, and my unworthy silence. I have still before me that entertaining narrative which would have interested me, not only in the progress of the *carissima famiglia*, but in the motions of a Tartar camp, or the march of a caravan of Arabs; the mixture of just observation and lively imagery, the strong sense of a man, expressed with the easy elegance of a female. I still recollect with pleasure the happy comparison of the Rhine, who had heard so much of liberty on both his banks, that he wandered with mischievous licentiousness over all the adjacent meadows.* The inundation, alas! has now spread much wider; and it is sadly to be feared that the Elbe, the Po, and the Danube, may imitate the vile example of the Rhine: I shall be content, however, if our own Thames still preserves his fair character of

Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

These agreeable epistles of Maria produced only some dumb intentions, and some barren remorse; nor have I deigned, except by a brief missive from my chancellor, to express how much I loved the author, and how much I was pleased with the composition. That amiable author I have known and loved from the first dawning of her life and *coquetry* to the present maturity of her talents; and as long as I remain on this planet, I shall pursue, with the same tender and even anxious concern, the future steps of her establishment and life. That establishment must be splendid; that life must be happy. She is endowed with every gift of nature and for-

* Mr Gibbon alludes to letters written to him by miss Holroyd, when she was returning from Switzerland, along the Rhine, to England.

tune; but the advantage which she will derive from them depends almost entirely on herself. You must not, you shall not, think yourself unworthy to write to any man: there is none whom your correspondence would not amuse and satisfy. I will not undertake a task which my taste would not adopt, and my indolence would too soon relinquish; but I am really curious, from the best motives, to have a particular account of your own studies and daily occupation. What books do you read? and how do you employ your time and your pen? Except some professed scholars, I have often observed that women in general read much more than men; but for want of a plan, a method, a fixed object, their reading is of little benefit to themselves or others. If you will inform me of the species of reading to which you have the most propensity, I shall be happy to contribute my share of advice or assistance. I lament that you have not left me some monument of your pencil. Lady Elizabeth Foster has executed a very pretty drawing, taken from the door of the green-house where we dined last summer, and including the poor acacia, (now recovered from the cruel shears of the gardener,) the end of the terrace, the front of the pavilion, and a distant view of the country, lake, and mountains. I am almost reconciled to d'Apples' house, which is nearly finished. Instead of the monsters which lord Hercules Sheffield extirpated, the terrace is already shaded with the new acacias and plantains; and although the uncertainty of possession restrains me from building, I myself have planted a bosquet at the bottom of the garden, with such admirable skill that it affords shade without intercepting prospect. The society of the aforesaid Eliza, of the duchess of Devonshire, &c. has been very interesting; but they are now flown beyond the Alps, and pass the winter at Pisa. The Legards, who have long since left this place, should be at present in Italy; but I believe Mrs Grimstone and her daughter returned to England.

The Levades are highly flattered by your remembrance. Since you still retain some attachment to this delightful country, and it is indeed delightful, why should you despair of seeing it once more? The happy peer or commoner, whose name you may assume, is still concealed in the book of fate; but, whosoever he may be, he will cheerfully obey your commands, of leading you from ——— castle to Lausanne, and from Lausanne to Rome and Naples. Before that event takes place, I may possibly see you in Sussex; and, whether as a visitor or a fugitive, I hope to be welcomed with a friendly embrace. The delay of this year was truly painful, but it was inevitable; and individuals must submit to those storms which have overturned the thrones of the earth. The tragic story of the archbishop of Arles I have now somewhat a better right to require at your hands. I wish to have it in all its horrid details;* and as you

The answer to Mr Gibbon's letter is annexed, as giving the best account I have seen of the barbarous transaction alluded to. S.

“ Sheffield place, November, 1792.

“ YOUR three letters received yesterday caused the most sincere pleasure to each individual of this family; to none more than myself. Praise (I fear, beyond my deserts,) from one whose opinion I so highly value, and whose esteem I so much wish to preserve, is more pleasing than I can describe. I had not neglected to make the collection of facts which you recommend, and which the great variety of unfortunate persons whom we see, or with whom we correspond, enables me to make.

“ As to that part of your letter which respects *my studies*, I can only say, the slightest hint on that subject is always received with the greatest gratitude, and attended to with the utmost punctuality; but I must decline that topic for the present, to obey your commands, which require from me the horrid account of the *massacre aux Carmes*. Eight respectable ecclesiastics landed, about the beginning of ——— from an open boat at Seaford, wet as the waves. ——— ves of the coast were endeavouring to get from

are now so much mingled with the French exiles, I am of opinion, that were you to keep a journal of all

them what they had not, viz. (money,) when a gentleman of the neighbourhood came to their protection, and, finding they had nothing, shewed his good sense by dispatching them to milord Sheffield: they had been pillaged, and with great difficulty had escaped from Paris. The reception they met with at this house seemed to make the greatest impression on them; they were in extacy on finding M. de Lally living: they gradually became cheerful, and enjoyed their dinner; they were greatly affected as they recollected themselves, and found us attending on them. Having dined, and drank a glass of wine, they began to discover the beauties of the dining-room and of the chateau: as they walked about, they were overheard to express their admiration at the treatment they met, and *from Protestants*. We then assembled in the library, formed half a circle round the fire, M. de Lally and Milord occupying the hearth, *à l'Angloise*, and questioning the priests concerning their escape. Thus we discovered that two of these unfortunate men were in the Carmelite convent at the time of the massacre of the one hundred and twenty priests, and had most miraculously escaped by climbing trees in the garden, and from thence over the tops of the buildings. One of them, a man of superior appearance, described, in the most pathetic manner, the death of the archbishop of Arles, to the following purport, and with such simplicity and feeling as to leave no doubt of the truth of all that he said. On the second of September, about five o'clock in the evening, at the time they were permitted to walk in the garden, expecting every hour to be released, they expressed their surprise at seeing several large pits, which had been digging for two days past: they said, The day is almost spent, and yet Manuel told a person who interceded for us last Thursday, that on the Sunday following not one should remain in captivity: we are still prisoners. Soon after, they heard shouts, and some musket-shots. An ensign of the national guard, some commissaries of the sections, and some Marseillois, rushed in: the miserable victims, who were dispersed in the garden, assembled under the walls of the church, not daring to go in, lest it should be polluted with blood. One man, who was behind the rest, was shot.

the authentic facts which they relate, it would be an agreeable exercise at present, and a future source of entertainment and instruction.

'*Point de coup de fusil,*' cried one of the chiefs of the assassins, thinking that kind of death too easy. These well-trained fusileers went to the rear; les piques, les haches, les poignards, came forward. They demanded the archbishop of Arles; he was immediately surrounded by all the priests. The worthy prelate said to his friends, 'Let me pass; if my blood will appease them, what signifies it if I die? Is it not my duty to preserve your lives at the expense of my own?' He asked the eldest of the priests to give him absolution: he knelt to receive it; and when he arose, forced himself from them, advanced slowly, and with his arms crossed upon his breast, and his eyes raised to heaven, said to the assassins, '*Je suis celui que vous cherchez.*' His appearance was so dignified and noble, that during ten minutes not one of these wretches had courage to lift his hand against him: they upbraided each other with cowardice, and advanced; one look from this venerable man struck them with awe, and they retired. At last one of the miscreants struck off the cap of the archbishop with a pike; respect once violated, their fury returned, and another from behind cut him through the skull with a sabre. He raised his right hand to his eyes; with another stroke they cut off his hand. The archbishop said, '*O! mon dieu!*' and raised the other: a third stroke across the face left him sitting; the fourth extended him lifeless on the ground; and then all pressed forward, and buried their pikes and poignards in the body. The priests all agreed that he had been one of the most amiable men in France; and that his only *crime* was having, since the revolution, expended his private fortune to support the necessitous clergy of his diocese. The second victim was the général des Bénédictins. Then the national guards obliged the priests to go into the church, telling them they should appear, one after another, before the commissaires du section. They had hardly entered before the people impatiently called for them; upon which, all kneeling before the altar, the bishop of Beauvais gave them absolution: they were then obliged to go out, two by two; they passed before a commissaire, who did not question, but

I should be obliged to you, if you would make, or find, some excuse for my not answering a letter from your aunt, which was presented to me by Mr Fowler. I shewed him some civilities, but he is now a poor invalid, confined to his room. By her channel and yours I should be glad to have some information of the health, spirits, and situation, of Mrs Gibbon of Bath, whose alarms (if she has any) you may dispel. She is in my debt. Adieu; most truly yours.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. LADY SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, November 10th, 1792.

I COULD never forgive myself, were I capable of writing by the same post a political epistle to the father, and a friendly letter to the daughter, without sending any token of remembrance to the respectable matron, my dearest my lady, whom I have now loved as a sister for something better or worse than twenty years. No, indeed; the historian may be careless,

only counted, his victims;* they had in their sight the heaps of dead, to which they were going to add. Among the one hundred and twenty priests thus sacrificed, were the bishops of Zaintes and Beauvais (both of the Rochefoucauld family.) I should not omit to remark, that one of the priests observed, they were assassinated because they would not swear to a constitution which their murderers had destroyed. We had (to comfort us for this melancholy story) the most grateful expressions of gratitude towards the English nation, from whom they did not do us the justice to expect such a reception.

"There can be no doubt that the whole business of the massacres was concerted at a meeting at the duke of Orleans' house. I shall make you as dismal as myself by this narration. I must change the style. * * * * *

* * * "Citoyen Gibbon, je suis ton égal.

"MARIA J. HOLROYD."

* Visum est lenti quassisse nocentem
In numerum pars magna perit. LUCAN, lib. 2. v. 110. S.

he may be indolent, he may always intend and never execute,—but he is neither a monster nor a statue; he has a memory, a conscience, a heart—and that heart is sincerely devoted to lady Sheffield. He must even acknowledge the fallacy of a sophism which he has sometimes used, and she has always and most truly denied; that where the persons of a family are strictly united, the writing to one is in fact writing to all; and that consequently all his numerous letters to the husband may be considered as equally addressed to his wife. He feels, on the contrary, that separate minds have their distinct ideas and sentiments, and that each character, either in speaking or writing, has its peculiar tone of conversation. He agrees with the maxim of Rousseau, that three friends who wish to disclose a common secret will impart it only *deux à deux*; and he is satisfied that, on the present memorable occasion, each of the persons of the Sheffield family will claim a peculiar share in this triple missive, which will communicate however a triple satisfaction. The experience of what may be effected by vigorous resolution, encourages the historian to hope that he shall cast the skin of the old serpent, and hereafter shew himself as a new creature.

I lament, on all our accounts, that the last year's expedition to Lausanne did not take place in a golden period of health and spirits. But we must reflect, that human felicity is seldom without alloy; and if we cannot indulge the hope of your making a second visit to Lausanne, we must look forward to my residence next summer at Sheffield place, where I must find you in the full bloom of health, spirits, and beauty. I can perceive, by all public and private intelligence, that your house has been the open hospitable asylum of French fugitives; and it is a sufficient proof of the firmness of your nerves, that you have not been overwhelmed or agitated by such a concourse of strangers. Curiosity and compassion may in some degree have supported you. Every

day has presented to your view some new scene of that strange tragical romance which occupies all Europe so infinitely beyond any event that has happened in our time, and you have the satisfaction of not being a mere spectator of the distress of so many victims of false liberty. The benevolent fame of lord S. is widely diffused.

From Angletine's last letter to Maria you have already some idea of the melancholy state of her poor father. As long as Mr de Severy allowed our hopes and fears to fluctuate with the changes of his disorder, I was unwilling to say anything on so painful a subject; and it is with the deepest concern that I now confess our absolute despair of his recovery. All his particular complaints are now lost in a general dissolution of the whole frame; every principle of life is exhausted; and as often as I am admitted to his bed-side, though he still looks and smiles with the patience of an angel, I have the heart-felt grief of seeing him each day drawing nearer to the term of his existence. A few weeks, possibly a few days, will deprive me of a most excellent friend, and break for ever the most perfect system of domestic happiness, in which I had so large and intimate a share. Wilhelm (who has obtained leave of absence from his military duty) and his sister behave and feel like tender and dutiful children; but they have a long gay prospect of life; and new connections, new families, will make them forget, in due time, the common lot of mortality. But it is madame de Severy whom I truly pity; I dread the effects of the first shock, and I dread still more the deep perpetual consuming affliction for a loss which can never be retrieved. You will not wonder that such reflections sadden my own mind; nor can I forget how much my situation is altered since I retired, nine years ago, to the banks of the Leman lake. The death of poor Deyverdun first deprived me of a domestic companion, who can never be supplied; and your visit has only

served to remind me that man, however amused and occupied in his closet, was not made to live alone. Severy will soon be no more; his widow for a long time, perhaps for ever, will be lost to herself and her friends; the son will travel; and I shall be left a stranger in the insipid circle of mere common acquaintance. The revolution of France, which first embittered and divided the society of Lausanne, has opposed a barrier to my Sussex visit, and may finally expel me from the paradise which I inhabit. Even that paradise, the expensive and delightful establishment of my house, library, and garden, almost becomes an incumbrance, by rendering it more difficult for me to relinquish my hold, or to form a new system of life in my native country, for which my income, though improved and improving, would be probably insufficient. But every complaint should be silenced by the contemplation of the French; compared with whose cruel fate, all misery is relative happiness. I perfectly concur in your partiality for Lally; though nature might forget some meaner ingredients of prudence, economy, &c., she never formed a purer heart, or a brighter imagination. If he be with you, I beg my kindest salutations to him. I am every day more closely united with the Neckers. Should France break, and this country be over-run, they would be reduced, in very humble circumstances, to seek a refuge; and where but in England? Adieu, dear madam: there is indeed much pleasure in discharging one's heart to a real friend. Ever yours.

EDWARD GIBBON ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD
SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, Nov. 25th, 1792.

AFTER the triple labour of my last dispatch, your experience of the creature might tempt you to suspect that it would again relapse into a long slumber. But, partly from the spirit of contradiction (though I am not a lady) and partly from the ease and pleasure

which I now find in the task, you see me again alive, awake, and almost faithful to my hebdomadal promise. The last week has not however afforded any events deserving the notice of an historian. Our affairs are still floating on the waves of the convention, and the ratification of a corrected treaty, which had been fixed for the twentieth, is not yet arrived; but the report of the diplomatic committee has been favourable, and it is generally understood that the leaders of the French republic do not wish to quarrel with the Swiss. We are gradually withdrawing and disbanding our militia. Geneva will be left to sink or swim, according to the humour of the people; and our last hope appears to be, that by submission and good behaviour we shall avert for some time the impending storm. A few days ago an odd accident happened in the French army—the desertion of the general. As the Neckers were sitting, about eight o'clock in the evening, in their drawing-room at Rolle,* the door flew open, and they were astounded by their servant's announcing *Monsieur le général de Montesquiou*! On the receipt of some secret intelligence of a *decret d'accusation*, and an order to arrest him, he had only time to get on horseback, to gallop through Geneva, to take boat for Copet, and to escape from his pursuers, who were ordered to seize him alive or dead. He left the Neckers after supper, passed through Lausanne in the night, and proceeded to Berne and Basle, whence he intended to wind his way through Germany, amidst enemies of every description, and to seek a refuge in England, America, or the moon. He told Necker, that the sole remnant of his fortune consisted in a wretched sum of twenty thousand livres; but the public report, or suspicion, bespeaks him in much better circumstances. Besides the reproach of acting with too much tameness and delay, he is accused of making very foul

* A considerable town between Lausanne and Geneva.

and exorbitant contracts; and it is certain that New Sparta is infected with this vice beyond the example of the most corrupt monarchy. Kellerman is arrived to take the command; and it is apprehended that on the first of December, after the departure of the Swiss, the French may *request* the permission of using Geneva, a friendly city, for their winter quarters. In that case, the democratical revolution, which we all foresee, will be very speedily effected.

I would ask you, whether you apprehend there was any treason in the duke of Brunswick's retreat, and whether you have totally withdrawn your confidence and esteem from that once-famed general? Will it be possible for England to preserve her neutrality with any honour or safety? We are bound, as I understand, by treaty, to guarantee the dominions of the king of Sardinia and the Austrian provinces of the Netherlands. These countries are now invaded and over-run by the French. Can we refuse to fulfil our engagements, without exposing ourselves to all Europe as a perfidious or pusillanimous nation? Yet, on the other hand, can we assist those allies without plunging headlong into an abyss whose bottom no man can discover? But my chief anxiety is for our domestic tranquillity; for I must find a retreat in England, should I be driven from Lannanne. The idea of a firm and honourable union of parties pleases me much; but you must frankly unfold what are the great difficulties that may impede so salutary a measure: you write to a man discreet in speech, and now careful of papers. Yet what can such a coalition avail? Where is the champion of the constitution? Alas, lord Guilford! I am much pleased with the Manchester ass. The asses or wolves who sacrificed him have cast off the mask too soon; and such a nonsensical act must open the eyes of many simple patriots who might have been led astray by the specious name of reform. It should be made as notorious as possible. Next winter may be the

crisis of our fate ; and if you begin to improve the constitution, you may be driven step by step from the disfranchisement of Old Sarum to the king in Newgate, the lords voted useless, the bishops abolished, and a house of commons without articles (*sans culottes*). Necker has ordered you a copy of his royal defence, which has met with, and deserved, universal success. The pathetic and argumentative parts are, in my opinion, equally good, and his mild eloquence may persuade without irritating. I have applied to this gentler tone some verses of Ovid (*Metamorph.* l. iii. 302, &c.*) which you may read. Madame de Stael has produced a second son. She talks wildly enough of visiting England this winter. She is a pleasant little woman. Poor Severy's condition is hopeless. Should he drag through the winter, madame de Severy would scarcely survive him. She kills herself with grief and fatigue. What a difference in Lausanne ! I hope triple answers are on the road. I must write soon ; the *times* will not allow me to read or think. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, Dec. 14th, 1792.

Our little storm has now completely subsided, and we are again spectators, though anxious spectators, of the general tempest that invades or threatens almost every country of Europe. Our troops are every day disbanding and returning home, and the greatest part of the French have evacuated the neighbourhood of Geneva. Monsieur Barthelemy, whom you have seen secretary in London, is most courteously entertained,

- * Quà tamen usque potest, vires sibi demere tentat.
Nec, quo centimanum dejecerat igne Typhœa,
Nunc armatur eo : nimium feritatis in illo.
Est aliud levius fulmen ; cui dextra Cyclopus
Sœvitæ, flammæque minus, minus addidit iræ :
Tela secunda vocant Superi.

as ambassador, by the Helvetic body. He is now at Berne, where a diet will speedily be convened; the language on both sides is now pacific, and even friendly; and some hopes are given of a provision for the officers of the Swiss guards who have survived the massacres of Paris.

January 1st, 1793.

WITH the return of peace I have relapsed into my former indolence; but now awakening, after a fortnight's slumber, I have little or nothing to add with regard to the internal state of this country; only the revolution of Geneva has already taken place, as I announced, but sooner than I expected. The Swiss troops had no sooner evacuated the place, than the *Egaliseurs*, as they are called, assembled in arms; and as no resistance was made, no blood was shed on the occasion. They seized the gates, disarmed the garrison, imprisoned the magistrates, imparted the rights of citizens to all the rabble of the town and country, and proclaimed a *national* convention, which has not yet met. They are all for a pure and absolute democracy; but some wish to remain a small independent state, whilst others aspire to become a part of the republic of France; and as the latter, though numerous, are more violent and absurd than their adversaries, it is highly probable that they will succeed. The citizens of the best families and fortunes have retired from Geneva into the Pays de Vaud; but the French methods of recalling or proscribing emigrants will soon be adopted. You must have observed, that Savoy is now become *le département du Mont Blanc*. I cannot satisfy myself, whether the mass of the people is pleased or displeased with the change; but my noble scenery is clouded by the democratical aspect of twelve leagues of the opposite coast, which every morning obtrude themselves on my view. I here conclude the first part of the history of our Alpine troubles, and now consider myself as

disengaged from all promise of periodical writing. Upon the whole, I kept it beyond our expectation; nor do I think that you have been sufficiently astonished by the wonderful effort of the triple dispatch.

You must now succeed to my task; and I shall expect, during the winter, a regular political journal of the events of your greater world. You are on the theatre, and may often be behind the scenes. You can always see, and may sometimes foresee. My own choice has indeed transported me into a foreign land; but I am truly attached, from interest and inclination, to my native country; and even as a citizen of the world, I wish the stability of England, the sole great refuge of mankind, against the opposite mischiefs of despotism and democracy. I was indeed alarmed, and the more so, as I saw that you were not without apprehension; but I now glory in the triumph of reason and genuine patriotism which seems to pervade the country; nor do I dislike some mixture of popular enthusiasm, which may be requisite to encounter our mad or wicked enemies with equal arms. The behaviour of Fox does not surprise me. You may remember what I told you last year at Lausanne, when you attempted his defence,—that his inmost soul was deeply tinged with democracy. Such wild opinions cannot be easily reconciled with his excellent understanding, but “it is true, ’tis pity, and pity it is, ’tis true.” He will surely ruin himself in the opinion of the wise and good men of his own party. You have crushed the daring subverters of the constitution; but I now fear the moderate well-meaners, reformers. Do not, I beseech you, tamper with parliamentary representation. The present house of commons forms, in *practice*, a body of gentlemen who must always sympathize with the interests and opinions of the people; and the slightest innovation launches you, without rudder or compass, on a dark and dangerous ocean of theoretical experiment. On this subject I am indeed serious.

Upon the whole, I like the beginning of ninety-three better than the end of ninety-two. The illusion seems to break away throughout Europe. I think England and Switzerland are safe. Brabant adheres to its old constitution. The Germans are disgusted with the rapine and insolence of their deliverers. The pope is resolved to head his armies; and the Lazzaroni of Naples have presented St Januarius with a gold fuzee, to fire on the brigands François. So much for politics, which till now never had such possession of my mind. Next post I will write about myself and my own designs. Alas, your poor eyes! Make the Maria write; I will speedily answer her. My lady is still dumb. The German posts are now slow and irregular. You had better write by the way of France, under cover. Direct to *Le Citoyen Rebours, à Pontalier, France*. Adieu. Ever yours.

IS THE SAME.

Lausanne, January 6th, 1793.

THERE was formerly a time when our correspondence was a painful discussion of my private affairs; a vexatious repetition of losses, of disappointments, of sales, &c. These affairs are decently arranged: but public cares have now succeeded to private anxiety, and our whole attention is lately turned from Lenborough and Beriton to the political state of France and of Europe. From these politics however one letter shall be free, while I talk of myself and of my own plans; a subject most interesting to a friend, and only to a friend.

I know not whether I am sorry or glad that my expedition has been postponed to the present year. It is true, that I now wish myself in England, and almost repent that I did not grasp the opportunity when the obstacles were comparatively smaller than they are now likely to prove. Yet had I reached you last summer, before the month of August, a considera-

ble portion of my time would be now elapsed, and I should already begin to think of my departure. If the gout should spare me this winter, (and as yet I have not felt any symptom,) and if the spring should make a soft and early appearance, it is my intention to be with you in Downing street before the end of April, and thus to enjoy six weeks or two months of the most agreeable season of London and the neighbourhood, after the hurry of parliament is subsided, and before the great rural dispersion. As the banks of the Rhine and the Belgic provinces are completely overspread with anarchy and war, I have made up my mind to pass through the territories of the French republic. From the best and most recent information, I am satisfied that there is little or no real danger in the journey; and I must arm myself with patience to support the vexatious insolence of democratical tyranny. I have even a sort of curiosity to spend some days at Paris, to assist at the debates of the Pandæmonium, to seek an introduction to the principal devils, and to contemplate a new form of public and private life, which never existed before, and which I devoutly hope will not long continue to exist. Should the obstacles of health or weather confine me at Lausanne till the month of May, I shall scarcely be able to resist the temptation of passing some part at least of the summer in my own little paradise. But all these schemes must ultimately depend on the great question of peace and war, which will indeed be speedily determined. Should France become impervious to an English traveller, what must I do? I shall not easily resolve to explore my way through the unknown languages and abominable roads of the interior parts of Germany, to embark in Holland, or perhaps at Hamburg, and to be finally intercepted by a French privateer. My stay in England appears not less doubtful than the means of transporting myself. Should I arrive in the spring, it is possible, and barely possible, that I should re-

turn here in the autumn: it is much more probable that I shall pass the winter, and there may be even a chance of my giving my own country a longer trial. In my letter to my lady I fairly exposed the decline of Lausanne; but such an establishment as mine must not be lightly abandoned; nor can I discover what adequate mode of life my private circumstances, easy as they now are, could afford me in England. London and Bath have doubtless their respective merits, and I could wish to reside within a day's journey of Sheffield place. But a state of perfect happiness is not to be found here below; and in the possession of my library, house, and garden, with the relics of our society, and a frequent intercourse with the Neckers, I may still be tolerably content. Among the disastrous changes of Lausanne I must principally reckon the approaching dissolution of poor Severy and his family. He is still alive, but in such a hopeless and painful decay, that we no longer conceal our wishes for his speedy release. I never loved nor esteemed him so much as in this last mortal disease, which he supports with a degree of energy, patience, and even cheerfulness, beyond all belief. His wife, whose whole time and soul are devoted to him, is almost sinking under her long anxiety. The children are most amiably assiduous to both their parents; and, at all events, his filial duties and worldly cares must detain the son some time at home.

And now approach, and let me drop into your most private ear a literary secret. Of the *Memoirs* little has been done, and with that little I am not satisfied. They must be postponed till a mature season: and I much doubt whether the book and the author can ever see the light at the same time. But I have long revolved in my mind another scheme of biographical writing; the lives, or rather the characters, of the most eminent persons in arts and arms, in church and state, who have flourished in Britain from the reign of Henry the Eighth to the present age. This

work, extensive as it may be, would be an amusement rather than a toil: the materials are accessible in our own language, and, for the most part, ready to my hands: but the subject, which would afford a rich display of human nature and domestic history, would powerfully address itself to the feelings of every Englishman. The taste or fashion of the times seems to delight in picturesque decorations; and this series of British portraits might aptly be accompanied by the respective heads taken from originals, and engraved by the best masters. Alderman Boydell, and his son-in-law, Mr George Nichol, bookseller in Pall-mall, are the great undertakers in this line. On my arrival in England I shall be free to consider whether it may suit me to proceed in a mere literary work without any other decorations than those which it may derive from the pen of the author. It is a serious truth, that I am no longer ambitious of fame or money; that my habits of industry are much impaired; and that I have reduced my studies to be the loose amusement of my morning hours, the repetition of which will insensibly lead me to the last term of existence. And for this very reason I shall not be sorry to bind myself by a liberal engagement, from which I may not with honour recede.

Before I conclude, we must say a word or two of parliamentary and pecuniary concerns. 1. We all admire the generous spirit with which you damned the assassins. I hope that your abjuration of all future connection with Fox was not quite so peremptory as it is stated in the French papers. Let him do what he will, I must love the dog. The opinion of parliament in favour of Louis was declared in a manner worthy of the representatives of a great and a wise nation. It will certainly have a powerful effect; and if the poor king be not already murdered, I am satisfied that his life is in safety: but is such a life worth his care? Our debates will now become every day more interesting; and as I expect

from you only opinions and anecdotes, I most earnestly conjure you to send me Woodfall's Register as often (and that must be very often) as the occasion deserves it. I now spare no expense for news.

I want some account of Mrs G.'s health. Will my lady never write? How can people be so indolent! I suppose this will find you at Sheffield place during the recess, and that the heavy baggage will not move till after the birth-day. Shall I be with you by the first of May? The Gods only know. I almost wish that I had accompanied madame de Stael. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Begun Feb. 9—ended Feb. 18, 1793.

THE struggle is at length over, and poor de Severy is no more. He expired about ten days ago, after every vital principle had been exhausted by a complication of disorders, which had lasted above five months: and a mortification in one of his legs, that gradually rose to the more noble parts, was the immediate cause of his death. His patience and even cheerfulness supported him to the fatal moment; and he enjoyed every comfort that could alleviate his situation; the skill of his physicians, the assiduous tenderness of his family, and the kind sympathy not only of his particular friends, but even of common acquaintance, and generally of the whole town. The stroke has been severely felt: yet I have the satisfaction to perceive that madame de Severy's health is not affected; and we may hope that in time she will recover a tolerable share of composure and happiness. Her firmness has checked the violent sallies of grief; her gentleness has preserved her from the worst of symptoms—a dry, silent despair. She loves to talk of her irreparable loss, she descants with pleasure on his virtues; her words are interrupted with tears, but those tears are her best relief; and her tender feelings will

insensibly subside into an affectionate remembrance. Wilhelm is much more deeply wounded than I could imagine, or than he expected himself: nor have I ever seen the affliction of a son more lively and sincere. Severy was indeed a very valuable man: without any shining qualifications, he was endowed in a high degree with good sense, honour, and benevolence; and few men have filled with more propriety their circle in private life. For myself, I have had the misfortune of knowing him too late, and of losing him too soon. But enough of this melancholy subject.

The affairs of this theatre, which must always be minute, are now grown so tame and tranquil, that they no longer deserve the historian's pen. The new constitution of Geneva is slowly forming, without much noise or any bloodshed; and the patriots, who have staid in hopes of guiding and restraining the multitude, flatter themselves that they shall be able at least to prevent their mad countrymen from giving themselves to the French, the only mischief that would be absolutely irretrievable. The revolution of Geneva is of less consequence to us however than that of Savoy; but our fate will depend on the general event rather than on these particular causes. In the meanwhile we hope to be quiet spectators of the struggle of this year; and we seem to have assurances that both the emperor and the French will compound for the neutrality of the Swiss. The Helvetic body does not acknowledge the republic of France; but Barthelemy, their ambassador, resides at Baden, and steals, like Chauvelin, into a kind of extra-official negotiation. All spirit of opposition is quelled in the canton of Berne, and the perpetual banishment of the Van Bercham family has scarcely excited a murmur. It will probably be followed by that of colonel Polier: the crime alleged in their sentence is the having assisted at the federation dinner at Rolle two years ago; and as they are absent, I

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could almost wish that they had been summoned to appear, and heard in their own defence. To the general supineness of the inhabitants of Lausanne I must ascribe, that the death of Louis the Sixteenth has been received with less horror and indignation than I could have wished. I was much tempted to go into mourning, and probably should, had the duchess been still here ; but, as the only Englishman of any rank, I was afraid of being singular ; more especially as our French emigrants, either from prudence or poverty, do not wear black, nor do even the Neckers. Have you read his discourse for the king ? It might indeed supersede the necessity of mourning. I should judge from your last letter, and from the diary, that the French declaration of war must have rather surprised you. You will not doubt my best wishes for the destruction of the miscreants ; but I love England still more than I hate France. All reasonable chances are in favour of a confederacy, such as was never opposed to the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth ; but, after the experience of last year, I distrust reason, and confess myself fearful for the event. The French are strong in numbers, activity, and enthusiasm ; they are rich in rapine ; and, although their strength may be only that of a phrenzy fever, they may do infinite mischief to their neighbours before they can be reduced to a strait waistcoat. I dread the effects that may be produced on the minds of the people by the increase of debt and taxes, probably losses, and possibly mismanagement. Our trade must suffer ; and though projects of invasion have been always abortive, I cannot forget that the fleets and armies of Europe have failed before the towns in America, which have been taken and plundered by a handful of buccaneers. I know nothing of Pitt as a war minister ; but it affords me much satisfaction that the intrepid wisdom of the new chancellor* is introduced into the cabinet.

* Lord Loughborough.

I wish, not merely on your own account, that you were placed in an active, useful station in government. I should not dislike you secretary at war.

I have little more to say of myself, or of my journey to England: you know my intentions, and the great events of Europe must determine whether they can be carried into execution this summer. If ***** has warmly adopted *your* idea, I shall speedily hear from him; but, in truth, I know not what will be my answer: I see difficulties which at first did not occur: I doubt my own perseverance, and my fancy begins to wander into new paths. The amusement of reading and thinking may perhaps satisfy a man who has paid his debt to the public; and there is more pleasure in building castles in the air than on the ground. I shall contrive some small assistance for your correspondent, though I cannot learn anything that distinguishes him from many of his countrymen; we have had our full share of poor emigrants: but if you wish that anything extraordinary should be done for this man, you must send me a measure. Adieu. I embrace my lady and Maria, as also Louisa. Perhaps I may soon write, without expecting an answer. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, April 27, 1793.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—for such you most surely are, nor does there exist a person who obtains, or shall ever obtain, a superior place in my esteem and affection;—

After too long a silence I was sitting down to write, when, only yesterday morning, (such is now the irregular slowness of the English post,) I was suddenly struck, struck indeed to the heart, by the fatal intelligence* from sir Henry Clinton and Mr de Lally.

* The death of lady Sheffield.

Alas! what is life, and what are our hopes and projects? When I embraced her at your departure from Lausanne, could I imagine that it was for the last time? When I postponed to another summer my journey to England, could I apprehend that I never, never should see her again? I always hoped that she would spin her feeble thread to a long duration, and that her delicate frame would survive (as is often the case) many constitutions of a stouter appearance. In four days! in your absence, in that of her children! But she is now at rest; and if there be a future life, her mild virtues have surely entitled her to the reward of pure and perfect felicity. It is for you that I feel, and I can judge of your sentiments by comparing them with my own. I have lost, it is true, an amiable and affectionate friend, whom I had known and loved above three-and-twenty years, and whom I often styled by the endearing name of sister. But you are deprived of the companion of your life, the wife of your choice, and the mother of your children; poor children! The liveliness of Maria, and the softness of Louisa, render them almost equally the objects of my tenderest compassion. I do not wish to aggravate your grief; but, in the sincerity of friendship, I cannot hold a different language. I know the impotence of reason, and I much fear that the strength of your character will serve to make a sharper and more lasting impression.

The only consolation in these melancholy trials to which human life is exposed, the only one at least in which I have any confidence, is the presence of a real friend; and of that, as far as it depends on myself, you shall not be destitute. I regret the few days that must be lost in some necessary preparations; but I trust that tomorrow se'nnight (May the fifth) I shall be able to set forward on my journey to England: and when this letter reaches you, I shall be considerably advanced on my way. As it is yet prudent to keep at a respectful distance from the banks of the French

Rhine, I shall incline a little to the right, and proceed by Schaffhausen and Stutgard to Frankfort and Cologne: the Austrian Netherlands are now open and safe, and I am sure of being able at least to pass from Ostend to Dover; whence, without passing through London, I shall pursue the direct road to Sheffield place. Unless I should meet with some unforeseen accidents and delays, I hope, before the end of the month, to share your solitude, and sympathize with your grief. All the difficulties of the journey, which my indolence had probably magnified, have now disappeared before a stronger passion; and you will not be sorry to hear that, as far as Frankfort or Cologne, I shall enjoy the advantage of the society, the conversation, the German language, and the active assistance, of Severy. His attachment to me is the sole motive which prompts him to undertake this troublesome journey; and as soon as he has seen me over the roughest ground, he will immediately return to Lausanne. The poor young man loved lady S. as a mother, and the whole family is deeply affected by an event which reminds them too painfully of their own misfortunes. Adieu. I could write volumes, and shall therefore break off abruptly. I shall write on the road, and hope to find a few lines *à poste restante* at Frankfort and Brussels. Adieu. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Lausanne, May 1793

I MUST write a few lines before my departure, though indeed I scarcely know what to say. Nearly a fortnight has now elapsed since the first melancholy tidings, without my having received the slightest subsequent accounts of your health and situation. Your own silence announces too forcibly how much you are involved in your feelings; and I can but too easily conceive that a letter to me would be more painful

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than to an indifferent person. But that amiable man count Lally might surely have written a second time; but your sister, who is probably with you;—but Maria,—alas! poor Maria!—I am left in a state of darkness to the workings of my own fancy, which imagines everything that is sad and shocking. What can I think of for your relief and comfort? I will not expatiate on those common-place topics which have never dried a single tear; but let me advise, let me urge, you to force yourself into business, as I would try to force myself into study. The mind must not be idle; if it be not exercised on external objects, it will prey on its own vitals. A thousand little arrangements, which must precede a long journey, have postponed my departure three or four days beyond the term which I had first appointed; but all is now in order, and I set off to-morrow, the ninth instant, with my *valet de chambre*, a courier on horseback, and Severy, with his servant, as far as Frankfort. I calculate my arrival at Sheffield place (how I dread and desire to see that mansion!) for the first week in June, soon after this letter; but I will try to send you some later intelligence. I never found myself stronger or in better health. The German road is now cleared, both of enemies and allies; and though I must expect fatigue, I have not any apprehensions of danger. It is scarcely possible that you should meet me at Frankfort, but I shall be much disappointed at not finding a line at Brussels or Ostend. Adieu. If there be any invisible guardians, may they watch over you and yours! Adieu.

TO THE SAME.

Frankfort, May 19th, 1793.

AND here I am, in good health and spirits, after one of the easiest, safest, and pleasantest, journies which I ever performed in my whole life. Not the appearance of an enemy, and hardly the appearance of a war. Yet I hear, as I am writing, the cannon

of the siege of Mayence, at the distance of twenty miles; and long, very long, will it be heard. It is confessed, on all sides, that the French fight with a courage worthy of a better cause. The town of Mayence is strong, their artillery admirable; they are already reduced to horse-flesh, but they have still the resource of eating the inhabitants, and at last of eating one another; and if that repast could be extended to Paris and the whole country, it might essentially contribute to the relief of mankind. Our operations are carried on with more than German slowness; and when the besieged are quiet, the besiegers are perfectly satisfied with their progress. A spirit of division undoubtedly prevails; and the character of the Prussians for courage and discipline is sunk lower than you can possibly imagine. Their glory has expired with Frederick. I am sorry to have missed lord Elgin, who is beyond the Rhine with the king of Prussia. As I am impatient, I propose setting forwards tomorrow afternoon, and shall reach Ostend in less than eight days. The passage must depend on winds and packets; and I hope to find at Brussels or Dover a letter which will direct me to Sheffield place or Downing street. Severy goes back from hence. Adieu. I embrace the dear girls. Ever yours.

FROM THE SAME.

Brussels, May 27th, 1793.

THIS day, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, I arrived at this place in excellent preservation. My expedition, which is now drawing to a close, has been a journey of perseverance rather than speed; of some labour since Frankfort, but without the smallest degree of difficulty or danger. As I have every morning been seated in the chaise soon after sun-rise, I propose indulging tomorrow till eleven o'clock, and going that day no farther than Ghent. On Wednesday, the 29th instant, I shall reach Ostend

in good time ; just eight days, according to my former reckoning, from Frankfort. Beyond that, I can say nothing positive ; but should the winds be propitious, it is possible that I may appear next Saturday, June first, in Downing street. After that earliest date, you will expect me day by day till I arrive. Adieu. I embrace the dear girls, and salute Mrs Holroyd. I rejoice that you have anticipated my advice by plunging into business ; but I should now be sorry if that business, however important, detained us long in town. I do not wish to make a public exhibition, and only sigh to enjoy you, and the precious remnant, in the solitude of Sheffield place. Ever yours.

If I am successful, I may outstrip or accompany this letter. Your's and Maria's waited for me here, and overpaid my journey.

THE preceding Letters intimate that, in return for my visit to Lausanne in 1791, Mr Gibbon engaged to pass a year with me in England; and that the war, which rendered travelling exceedingly inconvenient, especially to a person who, from bodily infirmities, required every accommodation, prevented his undertaking so formidable a journey at the time proposed.

The call of friendship, however, was sufficient to make him overlook every personal consideration, when he thought his presence might prove a consolation. I must ever regard it as the most endearing proof of his sensibility, and of his possessing the true spirit of friendship; that after relinquishing the thought of his intended visit, he hastened to England, in spite of increasing impediments, to soothe me by the most generous sympathy, and to alleviate my domestic affliction: neither his great corpulency, nor his extraordinary bodily infirmities, nor any other consideration, could prevent him a moment from resolving on an undertaking that might have deterred the most active young man. With an alertness by no means natural to him, he almost immediately undertook a circuitous journey, along the frontiers of an enemy worse than savage, within the sound of their cannon, within the range of the light troops of the different armies, and through roads ruined by the enormous machinery of war.

The readiness with which he engaged in this kind office, at a time when a selfish spirit might have pleaded a thousand reasons for declining so hazardous a journey, conspired, with the peculiar charms of his society, to render his arrival a cordial to my mind. I had the satisfaction of finding that his own delicate and precarious health had not suffered in the service

of his friend. He arrived in the beginning of June at my house in Downing street, in good health ; and after passing about a month with me there, we settled at Sheffield place for the remainder of summer ; where his wit, learning, and cheerful politeness, delighted a great variety of characters.

Although he was inclined to represent his health as better than it really was, his habitual dislike to motion appeared to increase ; his inaptness to exercise confined him to the library and dining-room, and there he joined my friend Mr Frederick North in pleasant arguments against exercise in general. He ridiculed the unsettled and restless disposition that summer, the most uncomfortable, as he said, of all seasons, generally gives to those who have the free use of their limbs. Such arguments were little required to keep society, Mr Jekyll, Mr Douglas, &c. within doors, when his company was only there to be enjoyed ; for neither the fineness of the season, nor the most promising parties of pleasure, could tempt the company of either sex to desert him.

Those who have enjoyed the society of Mr Gibbon will agree with me, that his conversation was still more captivating than his writings. Perhaps no man ever divided time more fairly between literary labour and social enjoyment ; and hence probably he derived his peculiar excellence of making his very extensive knowledge contribute, in the highest degree, to the use or pleasure of those with whom he conversed. He united, in the happiest manner imaginable, two characters which are not often found in the same person,—the profound scholar and the peculiarly agreeable companion.

It would be superfluous to attempt a very minute delineation of a character which is so distinctly marked in the Memoirs and Letters. He has described himself without reserve, and with perfect sincerity. The Letters, and especially the extracts from the Journal, which could not have been written

with any purpose of being seen, will make the reader perfectly acquainted with the man.

Excepting a visit to lord Egremont and Mr Hayley, whom he particularly esteemed, Mr Gibbon was not absent from Sheffield place till the beginning of October, when we were reluctantly obliged to part with him, that he might perform his engagement to Mrs Gibbon, at Bath ; the widow of his father, who had early deserved, and invariably retained, his affection. From Bath he proceeded to lord Spencer's at Althorp, a family which he always met with uncommon satisfaction. He continued in good health during the whole summer, and in excellent spirits (I never knew him enjoy better ;) and when he went from Sheffield place, little did I imagine it would be the last time that I should have the inexpressible pleasure of seeing him there in full possession of health.

The few following short letters, though not important in themselves, will fill up this part of the narrative better, and more agreeably, than anything which I can substitute in their place.

LETTERS RESUMED.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD
SHEFFIELD.

October 2d, 1793.

THE Cork street hotel has answered its recommendation; it is clean, convenient, and quiet. My first evening was passed at home in a very agreeable *tête-à-tête* with my friend Elmsley. Yesterday I dined at Craufurd's with an excellent set, in which were Pelham and lord Egremont. I dine today with my Portuguese friend, madame de Sylva, at Grenier's; most probably with lady Webster, whom I met last night in Devonshire house, a constant, though late, resort of society. The duchess is as good, and lady Elizabeth is as seducing, as ever. No news whatsoever. You will see in the papers lord Hervey's memorial. I love vigour; but it is surely a strong measure to tell a gentleman you have *resolved* to pass the winter in his house. London is not disagreeable; yet I shall probably leave it on Saturday. If anything should occur, I will write. Adieu; ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

SUNDAY afternoon I left London, and lay at Reading; and Monday, in very good time, I reached this place, after a very pleasant airing; and am always so much delighted and improved with this union of ease and motion, that, were not the expense enormous, I would travel every year some hundred miles, more especially in England. I passed the day with Mrs Gibbon yesterday. In mind and conversation she is just the same as she was twenty years ago. She has spirits, appetite, legs, and eyes; and talks of living till ninety.* I can say from my heart, Amen

* She was then in her eightieth year. S

We dine at two, and remain together till nine; but, although we have much to say, I am not sorry that she talks of introducing a third or fourth actor. Lord Spencer expects me about the 20th; but if I can do it without offence, I shall steal away two or three days sooner, and you shall have advice of my motions. The troubles of Bristol have been serious and bloody. I know not who was in fault; but I do not like appeasing the mob by the extinction of the toll, and the removal of the Hereford militia, who had done their duty. Adieu. The girls must dance at Tunbridge. What would dear little aunt* say, if I was to answer her letter? Ever yours, &c.

York house, Bath,

Oct. 9th, 1793.

I still follow the old style, though the convention has abolished the Christian era, with months, weeks, days, &c.

TO THE SAME.

York house, Bath, October 13th, 1793.

I AM as ignorant of Bath in general, as if I were still at Sheffield. My impatience to get away makes me think it better to devote my whole time to Mrs Gibbon; and dear little aunt, whom I tenderly salute, will excuse me to her two friends, Mrs Hartley and Preston, if I make little or no use of her kind introduction. A *tête-à-tête* of eight or nine hours every day is rather difficult to support; yet I do assure you, that our conversation flows with more ease and spirit when we are alone, than when any auxiliaries are summoned to our aid. She is indeed a wonderful woman, and I think all the faculties of her mind stronger, and more active, than I have ever known them. I have settled that ten full days may be sufficient for all the purposes of our interview. I should therefore depart next Friday, the eighteenth

* Mrs Holroyd.

instant, and am indeed expected at Althorp on the twentieth; but I may possibly reckon without my host, as I have not yet apprised Mrs Gibbon of the term of my visit, and will certainly not quarrel with her for a short delay. Adieu. I must have some political speculations. The campaign, at least on our side, seems to be at an end. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

Althorp Library, Tuesday, four o'clock.

WE have so completely exhausted this morning among the first editions of Cicero, that I can mention only my departure hence tomorrow, the sixth instant. I shall lie quietly at Woburn, and reach London in good time on Thursday. By the following post I will write somewhat more largely. My stay in London will depend partly on my amusement and your being fixed at Sheffield place; unless you think I can be comfortably arranged for a week or two with you at Brighton. The military remarks seem good; but now to what purpose? Adieu. I embrace and much rejoice in Louisa's improvement. Lord Ossory was from home at Farning Woods.

TO THE SAME.

London, Friday, Nov. 8th, four o'clock.

WALPOLE has just delivered yours, and I hasten the direction, that you may not be at a loss. I will write tomorrow, but I am now fatigued, and rather unwell. Adieu. I have not seen a soul except Elmsley.

TO THE SAME.

St James's street, Nov. 9th, 1793.

As I dropt yesterday the word *unwell*, I flatter myself that the family would have been a little alarmed by my silence today. I am still awkward, though without any suspicions of gout, and have some idea

of having recourse to medical advice. Yet I creep out today in a chair, to dine with lord Lucan. But as it will be literally my first going down stairs, and as scarcely any one is apprised of my arrival, I know nothing, I have heard nothing, I have nothing to say. My present lodging, a house of Elmsley's, is cheerful, convenient, somewhat dear, but not so much as a hotel, a species of habitation for which I have not conceived any great affection. Had you been stationary at Sheffield, you would have seen me before the twentieth; for I am tired of rambling, and pant for my home—that is to say, for your house. But whether I shall have courage to brave *****, and a bleak down, time only can discover. Adieu I wish you back to Sheffield place. The health of dear Louisa is doubtless the first object; but I did not expect Brighton after Tunbridge. Whenever dear little aunt is separate from you, I shall certainly write to her; but at present how is it possible? Ever yours.

TO THE SAME AT BRIGHTHELMSTONE.

St James's street, Nov. 11th, 1793.

I MUST at length withdraw the veil before my state of health, though the naked truth may alarm you more than a fit of the gout. Have you never observed, through my *inexpressibles*, a large prominency, which, as it was not at all painful, and very little troublesome, I had strangely neglected for many years? But since my departure from Sheffield place it has increased, (most stupendously) is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Yesterday I sent for Farquhar,* who is allowed to be a very skilful surgeon. After viewing and palping, he very seriously desired to call in assistance, and has examined it again today with Mr Cline, a surgeon, as he says, of the first eminence. They both pronounce it a *hydrocele* (a collec-

* Now sir Walter Farquhar, baronet.

tion of water) which must be let out by the operation of tapping; but, from its magnitude and long neglect, they think it a most extraordinary case, and wish to have another surgeon, Dr Baillie, present. If the business should go off smoothly, I shall be delivered from my burthen (it is almost as big as a small child,) and walk about in four or five days with a truss. But the medical gentlemen, who never speak quite plain, insinuate to me the possibility of an inflammation, of fever, &c. I am not appalled at the thoughts of the operation, which is fixed for Wednesday next, twelve o'clock; but it has occurred to me that you might wish to be present, before and afterwards, till the crisis was past; and, to give you that opportunity, I shall solicit a delay till Thursday, or even Friday. In the meanwhile I crawl about with some labour, and much indecency, to Devonshire house (where I left all the fine ladies making flannel waistcoats*;) lady Lucan's, &c. Adieu. Varnish the business for the ladies; yet I am afraid it will be public;—the advantage of being notorious. Ever yours.

* For the soldiers in Flanders. S.

IMMEDIATELY on receiving the last letter, I went the same day from Brighthelmstone to London, and was agreeably surprised to find that Mr Gibbon had dined at lord Lucan's, and did not return to his lodgings, where I waited for him, till eleven o'clock at night. Those who have seen him within the last eight or ten years, must be surprised to hear that he could doubt whether his disorder was apparent. When he returned to England in 1787, I was greatly alarmed by a prodigious increase which I always conceived to proceed from a rupture. I did not understand why he, who had talked with me on every other subject relative to himself and his affairs without reserve, should never in any shape hint at a malady so troublesome; but on speaking to his valet de chambre, he told me Mr Gibbon could not bear the least allusion to that subject, and never would suffer him to notice it. I consulted some medical persons, who, with me supposing it to be a rupture, were of opinion that nothing could be done, and said that he surely must have had advice, and of course had taken all necessary precautions. He now talked freely with me about his disorder; which, he said, began in the year 1761; that he then consulted Mr Hawkins the surgeon, who did not decide whether it was the beginning of a rupture or an hydrocele; but he desired to see Mr Gibbon again when he came to town. Mr Gibbon, not feeling any pain, nor suffering any inconvenience, as he said, never returned to Mr Hawkins; and although the disorder continued to increase gradually, and of late years very much indeed, he never mentioned it to any person, however incredible it may appear, from 1761 to November 1793. I told him, that I had always supposed there was no doubt of its being a rupture; his answer was, that he never thought so, and that he, and the surgeons who attended him, were of opinion that it was an hydrocele.

It is now certain that it was originally a rupture, and that an hydrocele had lately taken place in the same part; and it is remarkable that his legs, which had been swelled about the ankle, particularly one of them, since he had the erysipelas in 1790, recovered their former shape as soon as the water appeared in another part, which did not happen till between the time he left Sheffield place, in the beginning of October, and his arrival at Althorp, towards the latter end of that month. On the Thursday following the date of his last letter, Mr Gibbon was tapped for the first time; four quarts of a transparent watery fluid were discharged by that operation. Neither inflammation nor fever ensued; the tumour was diminished to nearly half its size; the remaining part was a soft irregular mass. I had been with him two days before, and I continued with him above a week after the first tapping, during which time he enjoyed his usual spirits; and the three medical gentlemen who attended him will recollect his pleasantry, even during the operation. He was abroad again in a few days; but the water evidently collecting very fast, it was agreed that a second puncture should be made a fortnight after the first. Knowing that I should be wanted at a meeting in the country, he pressed me to attend it, and promised that, soon after the second operation was performed, he would follow me to Sheffield place; but before he arrived, I received the two following letters:—

MR GIBBON TO LORD SHEFFIELD, AT BRIGHTON.

St James's street, Nov. 25th, 1793.

THOUGH Farquhar has promised to write a line, I conceive you may not be sorry to hear directly from me. The operation of yesterday was much longer, more searching, and more painful, than the former; but it has eased and lightened me to a much greater

degree.* No inflammation, no fever, a delicious night, leave to go abroad tomorrow, and to go out of town when I please, *en attendant* the future measures of a radical cure. If you hold your intention of returning next Saturday to Sheffield place, I shall probably join you about the Tuesday following, after having passed two nights at Beckenham.† The Devons are going to Bath, and the hospitable Craufurd follows them. I passed a delightful day with Burke; an odd one with monsignor Erskine, the pope's nuncio. Of public news you and the papers know more than I do. We seem to have strong sea and land hopes; nor do I dislike the royalists having beaten the Sans-culottes, and taken Dol. How many minutes will it take to guillotine the seventy-three new members of the Convention, who are now arrested? Adieu. Ever yours.

St James's street, Nov. 30th, 1793.

It will not be in my power to reach Sheffield place quite so soon as I wished and expected. Lord Auckland informs me that he shall be at Lambeth next week, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I have therefore agreed to dine at Beckenham on Friday. Saturday will be spent there; and unless some extraordinary temptation should detain me another day, you will see me by four o'clock Sunday the ninth of December. I dine tomorrow with the chancellor at Hampstead, and, what I do not like at this time of year, without a proposal to stay all night. Yet I would not refuse, more especially as I had denied him on a former day. My health is good; but I shall have a final interview with Farquhar before I leave town. We are still in darkness about lord Howe and the French ships, but hope seems to preponderate.

* Three quarts of the same fluid as before were discharged.

† Eden farm.

Adieu. Nothing that relates to Louisa can be forgotten. Ever yours.

TO THE SAME.

St James's street, Dec. 6, 1793.

16 du mois Frimaire.

The man tempted me, and I did eat—and that man is no less than the chancellor. I dine today, as I intended, at Beckenham: but he recalls me (the third time this week) by a dinner tomorrow (Saturday) with Burke and Windham, which I do not possess sufficient fortitude to resist. Sunday he dismisses me again to the aforesaid Beckenham, but insists on finding me there on Monday, which he will probably do, supposing there should be room and welcome at the ambassador's. I shall not therefore arrive at Sheffield till Tuesday, the 10th instant; and though you may perceive I do not want society or amusement, I sincerely repine at the delay. You will likewise derive some comfort from hearing of the spirit and activity of my motions. Farquhar is satisfied, allows me to go, and does not think I shall be obliged to precipitate my return. Shall we never have anything more than hopes and rumours from lord Howe? Ever yours.

Mr Gibbon generally took the opportunity of passing a night or two with his friend lord Auckland, at Eden farm (ten miles from London,) on his passage to Sheffield place; and, notwithstanding his indisposition, he had lately made an excursion thither from London; when he was much pleased by meeting the archbishop of Canterbury, of whom he expressed a high opinion. He returned to London, to dine with lord Loughborough, to meet Mr Burke, Mr Windham, and particularly Mr Pitt, with whom he was not acquainted; and in his last journey to Sussex he

revisited Eden farm, and was much gratified by the opportunity of again seeing, during a whole day, Mr Pitt, who passed the night there. From lord Auckland's Mr Gibbon proceeded to Sheffield place, and his discourse was never more brilliant, nor more entertaining, than on his arrival. The parallels which he drew, and the comparisons which he made, between the leading men of this country, were sketched in his best manner, and were infinitely interesting. However, this last visit to Sheffield place became far different from any he had ever made before. That ready, cheerful, various, and illuminating conversation, which we had before admired in him, was not now always to be found in the library or the dining-room. He moved with difficulty, and retired from company sooner than he had been used to do. On the twenty-third of December his appetite began to fail him. He observed to me, that it was a very bad sign *with him*, when he could not eat his breakfast, which he had done at all times very heartily; and this seems to have been the strongest expression of apprehension that he was ever observed to utter. A considerable degree of fever now made its appearance. Inflammation arose from the weight and bulk of the tumour. Water again collected very fast; and when the fever went off, he never entirely recovered his appetite even for breakfast. I became very uneasy at his situation towards the end of the month, and thought it necessary to advise him to set out for London. He had before settled his plan to arrive there about the middle of January. I had company in the house, and we expected one of his particular friends; but he was obliged to sacrifice all social pleasure to the immediate attention which his health required. He went to London on the seventh of January, and the next day I received the following billet—the last he ever wrote.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

St James's street, four o'clock, Tuesday.

THIS date says everything. I was almost killed between Sheffield place and East Grinstead, by hard, frozen, long, and cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach to an Indian wig-wam. The rest was something less painful; and I reached this place half-dead, but not seriously feverish or ill. I found a dinner invitation from lord Lucan; but what are dinners to me? I wish they did not know of my departure. I catch the flying post. What an effort! Adieu, till Thursday or Friday."

By his own desire I did not follow him till Thursday the ninth; I then found him far from well; the tumour more distended than before, inflamed, and ulcerated in several places. Remedies were applied to abate the inflammation; but it was not thought proper to puncture the tumour for the third time till Monday the 13th of January, when no less than six quarts of fluid were discharged. He seemed much relieved by the evacuation. His spirits continued good. He talked, as usual, of passing his time at houses which he had often frequented with great pleasure—the duke of Devonshire's, Mr Craufurd's, lord Spencer's, lord Lucan's; sir Ralph Payne's, and Mr Batt's; and when I told him that I should not return to the country as I had intended, he pressed me to go; knowing I had an engagement there on public business, he said, "You may be back on Saturday, and I intend to go on Thursday to Devonshire house." I had not any apprehension that his life was in danger, although I began to fear that he might not be restored to a comfortable state, and that motion would be very troublesome to him; but he talked of a radical cure. He said, that it was fortunate the disorder had shewn itself while he was in England, where he might procure the best assist-

ance; and if a radical cure could not be obtained before his return to Lausanne, there was an able surgeon at Geneva, who would come to tap him when it should be necessary.

On Tuesday the fourteenth, when the risk of inflammation and fever from the last operation was supposed to be past, as the medical gentlemen who attended him expressed no fears for his life, I went that afternoon part of the way to Sussex, and the following day reached Sheffield place. The next morning, the sixteenth, I received by the post a good account of Mr Gibbon, which mentioned also that he hourly gained strength. In the evening came a letter by express, dated noon that day, which acquainted me that Mr Gibbon had had a violent attack the preceding night, and that it was not probable he could live till I came to him. I reached his lodgings in St James's street about midnight, and learned that my friend had expired a quarter before one o'clock that day, the sixteenth of January 1794.

After I left him on Tuesday afternoon, the fourteenth, he saw some company—lady Lucan and lady Spencer—and thought himself well enough at night to omit the opium draught which he had been used to take for some time. He slept very indifferently; before nine the next morning he rose, but could not eat his breakfast. However, he appeared tolerably well, yet complained at times of a pain in his stomach. At one o'clock he received a visit of an hour from madame de Sylva; and at three his friend Mr Craufurd, of Auchinames, (for whom he had a particular regard,) called, and stayed with him till past five o'clock. They talked, as usual, on various subjects; and twenty hours before his death Mr Gibbon happened to fall into a conversation, not uncommon with him, on the probable duration of his life. He said, that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. About six he ate

the wing of a chicken, and drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner he became very uneasy and impatient, complained a good deal, and appeared so weak, that his servant was alarmed. Mr Gibbon had sent to his friend and relation, Mr Robert Darell, whose house was not far distant, desiring to see him, and adding that he had something particular to say. But, unfortunately, this desired interview never took place.

During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a disposition to vomit. Soon after nine, he took his opium draught, and went to bed. About ten, he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven, the servant asked, whether he should send for Mr Farquhar? He answered, no; that he was as well as he had been the day before. At about half past eight, he got out of bed, and said he was "*plus adroit*" than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again, without assistance, better than usual. About nine, he said that he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet de chambre* returned, after attending Mr Farquhar out of the room, Mr Gibbon said, "*Pourquoi est-ce que vous me quittez ?*" This was about half-past eleven. At twelve, he drank some brandy and water from a tea-pot, and desired his favourite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign to show that he understood him. He

was quite tranquil, and did not stir; his eyes half-shut. About a quarter before one, he ceased to breathe.*

* The body was not opened till the fifth day after his death. It was then sound, except that a degree of mortification, not very considerable, had taken place on a part of the *colon*; which, with the whole of the *omentum*, of a very enlarged size, had descended into the *scrotum*, forming a bag that hung down nearly as low as the knee. Since that part had been inflamed and ulcerated, Mr Gibbon could not bear a truss; and when the last six quarts of fluid were discharged, the *colon* and *omentum* descending lower, they by their weight drew the lower part of the stomach downwards to the *os pubis*, and this probably was the immediate cause of his death.

The following is an account of the appearance of the body, given by an eminent surgeon who opened it:

“Aperto tumore, qui ab inguine usque ad genu se extenderat, observatum est partem ejus inferiorem constare ex tunica vaginali testis continenti duas quassi libras liquoris serosi tincti sanguine. Ea autem fuit sacci illius amplitudo ut portioni liquoris longè majori capiendæ sufficeret. In posteriori parte hujus sacci testis situs fuit. Hunc omnino sanum invenimus.

“Partem tumoris superiorem occupaverant integrum fere omentum et major pars intestini coli. Hæ partes, sacco sibi proprio inclusæ, sibi invicem et sacco suo adeo arcte adhæserunt ut colvisse viderentur in massam unam solidam et irregularem; cujus a tergo chorda spermatica sedem suam obtinuerat.

“In omento et in intestino colo haud dubia recentis inflammationis signa vidimus, necnon maculas nonnullas lividi coloris hinc inde sparsas.

“Aperto abdomine, ventriculum invenimus a naturali suo situ detractum usque ad annulum muscoli obliqui externi. Pylorem retrorsum et quassi sursum a duodeno retractum. In hepate ingentem numerum parvorum tuberculorum. Vesicam felleam bile admodum distentam. In cæteris visceribus, examini anatomico subjectis, nulli morbi vestigia extiterunt.”

The *valet de chambre* observed, that Mr Gibbon did not, at any time, shew the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death; and it does not appear that he ever thought himself in danger, unless his desire to speak to Mr Darell may be considered in that light.

Perhaps I dwell too long on these minute and melancholy circumstances. Yet the close of such a life can hardly fail to interest every reader; and I know that the public has received a different and erroneous account of my friend's last hours.

I can never cease to feel regret that I was not by his side at this awful period: a regret so strong, that I can express it only by borrowing (as Mason has done on a similar occasion) the forcible language of Tacitus: "*Mihi præter acerbitatem amici erepti, auget mæstitiam quod assidere valetudini fovere deficientem, satiari vultu, complexu non contigit.*" It is some consolation to me, that I did not, like Tacitus, by a long absence, anticipate the loss of my friend several years before his decease. Although I had not the mournful gratification of being near him on the day he expired, yet during his illness I had not failed to attend him with that assiduity which his genius, his virtues, and, above all, our long, uninterrupted, and happy friendship, sanctioned and demanded.

POSTSCRIPT.

MR GIBBON'S Will is dated the 1st of October 1791, just before I left Lausanne. He distinguishes me, as usual, in the most flattering manner :

“ I constitute and appoint the right honourable John lord Sheffield, Edward Darell, esquire, and John Thomas Batt, esquire, to be the executors of this my last Will and Testament : and as the execution of this trust will not be attended with much difficulty or trouble, I shall indulge these gentlemen in the pleasure of this last disinterested service, without wronging my feelings, or oppressing my heir, by too light or too weighty a testimony of my gratitude. My obligations to the long and active friendship of lord Sheffield I could never sufficiently repay.”

He then observes, that the right honourable lady Eliot, of Port-Eliot, is his nearest relation on the father's side ; but that her three sons are in such prosperous circumstances, that he may well be excused for making the two children of his late uncle, sir Stanier Porten, his heirs ; they being in a very different situation. He bequeaths annuities to two old servants ; three thousand pounds, and his furniture, plate, &c., at Lausanne, to Mr Wilhelm de Severy ; one hundred guineas to the poor of Lausanne, and fifty guineas each to the following persons—Lady Sheffield and daughters, Maria and Louisa, madame and mademoiselle de Severy, the count de Schomberg, mademoiselle la Chanoinesse de Polier, and M. le ministre Le Vade,—for the purchase of some token which may remind them of a sincere friend.

The Remains of Mr Gibbon were deposited in lord Sheffield's family burial-place in Fletching, Sussex: whereon is inscribed the following Epitaph, written at my request by a distinguished scholar, the Rev. Dr Parr:—

EDVARDUS GIBBON

**CRITICUS ACRI INGENIO ET MULTIPLICI DOCTRINA ORNATUS
IDEMQUE HISTORICORUM QUI FORTUNAM
IMPERII ROMANI
VEL LABENTIS ET INCLINATI VEL EVERSI ET FUNDITUS
DELETI LITTERIS MANDAVERINT
OMNIUM FACILE PRINCEPS
CUJUS IN MORIBUS ERAT MODERATIO ANIMI
CUM LIBERALI QUADAM SPECIE CONJUNCTA
IN SERMONE
MULTA GRAVITATI COMITAS SUAVITER ADSPERSA
IN SCRIPTIS
COPIOSUM SPLENDIDUM
CONCINNUM ORBE VERBORUM
ET SUMMO ARTIFICIO DISTINCTUM
ORATIONIS GENUS
RECONDITÆ EXQUISITÆQUE SENTENTIÆ
ET IN MONUMENTIS RERUM POLITICARUM OBSERVANDIS
ACUTA ET PERSPICAX PRUDENTIA
VIXIT ANNOS LVI MENS. VII DIES XXVIII
DECESSIT XVII CAL. FEB. ANNOS SACRO
MDCCLXXXIV
ET IN HOC MAUSOLEO SEPULTUS EST
VOLUNTATE JOHANNIS DOMINI SHEFFIELD,
O BENE MERENTI ET CONVICTORI HUMANISSIMO
H. TAB. P. C.**

LETTERS

TO AND FROM

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ

EXTRACT
FROM
LORD SHEFFIELD'S INTRODUCTION
TO
MR GIBBON'S CORRESPONDENCE.

THE letters of Mr Gibbon, from the time of his return to Switzerland in 1788, are annexed to his Memoirs, as the best continuation of them. Among his letters of an earlier date, I find several which he has alluded to, and others which will illustrate the account he has given of himself. These I flatter myself will please the generality of readers; since, when he touches on matters of private business, even subjects of the driest nature become interesting from his mode of treating them.

It has been sometimes thought necessary to offer to the public an apology for the publication of private letters. I have no scruple to say, that I publish these because they place my friend in an advantageous point of view. He might not perhaps have expected that all his letters should be printed; but I have no reason to believe that he would have been averse to the publication of any. If I had, they never would have been made public, however highly I might have conceived of their excellence.

THE EDITOR of the present re-publication of the Memoirs and Correspondence of Mr Gibbon has to observe that, with the exception of a few early critical

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letters on some dubious passages in ancient authors, and two or three of mere compliment in the French language, the present selection contains all which lord Sheffield has supplied from the pen of Mr Gibbon, that can in the slightest degree illustrate his Autobiography. Greater freedoms have been taken with some of the letters of his correspondents on points which have little or no connection with himself; the principal of which are the details by madame Necker of the early events of the French revolution, which, setting aside the numerous accounts of the same era, bear no sort of relation to the history of the person to whom they are addressed.—See Introduction, vol. I.

LETTERS

TO AND FROM

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

No. I.

MR GIBBON TO MRS PORTEN.

DEAR MADAM,

Lausanne, 1756.

FEAR no reproaches for your negligence, however great; for your silence, however long. I love you too well to make you any. Nothing, in my opinion, is so ridiculous as some kind of friends, wives, and lovers, who look on no crime as so heinous as the letting slip a post without writing. The charm of friendship is liberty; and he that would destroy the one, destroys, without designing it, the better half of the other. I compare friendship to charity, and letters to alms; the last signifies nothing without the first, and very often the first is very strong, although it does not shew itself by the other. It is not goodwill which is wanting, it is only opportunities or means. However, one month—two months—three months—four months: I began not to be angry, but to be uneasy, for fear some accident had happened to you. I was often on the point of writing, but was always stopped by the hopes of hearing from you the next post. Besides, not to flatter you, your excuse is a very bad one. *You cannot entertain me by your letters.* I think I ought to know that better than you; and I assure you that one of *your plain sincere*

letters entertains me more than the most polished one of Pliny or Cicero. 'Tis your heart speaks, and I look on your heart as much better in its way than either of their heads.

Out of pure politeness I ought to talk of * * * * * before myself. I was some hours with him in this place, that is to say, almost all the time he was here. I find him always * * * * * , always good-natured, always amusing, and always trifling. I asked him some questions about Italy; he told me, he hurried out of it as soon as he could, because there was no French comedy, and he did not love the Italian opera. I let slip some words of the pleasure he would have of seeing his native country again, on account of the services he could render her in parliament. "Yes," says he, "I want vastly to be at London; there are three years since I have seen Garrick." He spoke to me of you, and indeed not only with consideration, but with affection. Were there nothing else valuable in his character, I should love him, because he loves you. He told me he intended to see you as soon as he should be in England; I am glad he has kept his word. I was so taken up with my old friend, that I could not speak a word to * * * * *. He appeared, however, a good, sensible, modest, young man. Poor Minorca indeed thus lost! but poor Englishmen who have lost it! I think the second exclamation still stronger than the first. Poor lord Torrington! I can't help pitying him. What a shameful uncle he has! I shall lose all my opinion of my countrymen, if the whole nation, Whigs, Tories, Courtiers, Jacobites, &c. &c. &c., are not unanimous in detesting that man. Pray is there any truth in a story we had here, of a brother of admiral Byng's having killed himself out of rage and shame? I did not think he had any brothers alive. It is thought here that Byng will be acquitted. I hope not. Though I do not love rash judgments, I cannot help thinking him guilty.

You ask me when I shall come into England? How should I know it? The 14th of June I wrote to my father, and saying nothing of my return, which I knew would have been to no purpose, I desired him to give me a fixed allowance of 200*l.* a-year, or at least to allow me a servant. No answer. About a fortnight ago I renewed my request; and I cannot yet know what will be my success. I design to make a virtue of necessity, to keep quiet during this winter, and to put in use all my machines next spring, in order to come over.* I shall write the strongest and at the same time the most dutiful letter I can imagine to my father. If all that produces no effect, I don't know what I can do.

You talk to me of my cousin Ellison's wedding; but you don't say a word of who she is married to. Is it Elliot? Though you have not seen my father yet, I suppose you have heard of him. How was he in town? His wife, was she with him? Has marriage produced any change in his way of living? Is he to be always at Beriton, or will he come up to London in winter? Pray have you ever seen my mother-in-law, or heard anything more of her character? Compliments to everybody that makes me compliments: to the Gilberts, to the Comarques, to lord Nuneham, &c. When you see the Comarques again, ask them if they did not know, at Putney, monsieur la Vabre and his daughters; perhaps you know them yourself. I saw them lately in this country; one of them very well married.

The Englishman who lodges in our house is little sociable, at least for a reasonable person. My health always good, my studies pretty good. I understand Greek pretty well. I have even some kind of correspondence with several learned men, with Mr

* This letter is a curious specimen of the degree in which Mr Gibbon had lost the English language in a short time.

Crevier of Paris, with Mr Bretinger of Zurich, and with Mr Allamand, a clergyman of this country, the most reasonable divine I ever knew. Do you never read now? I am a little piqued that you say nothing of sir Charles Grandison; if you have not read it yet, read it for my sake. Perhaps Clarissa does not encourage you; but, in my opinion, it is much superior to Clarissa. When you have read it, read the letters of madame de Sevigné to her daughter; I don't doubt of their being translated into English. They are properly what I called, in the beginning of my letter, letters of the heart; the natural expressions of a mother's fondness, regret at their being at a great distance from one another, and continual schemes to get together again. All that, won't it please you? There is scarce anything else in six whole volumes: and notwithstanding that, few people read them without finding them too short. Adieu: my paper is at an end. I don't dare to tell you to write soon. Do it however, if you can. Yours affectionately,

E. GIBBON.

No. II.

MR GIBBON TO HIS FATHER.

DEAR SIR,

1760.

AN address in writing, from a person who has the pleasure of being with you every day, may appear singular. However, I have preferred this method, as upon paper I can speak without a blush, and be heard without interruption. If my letter displeases you, impute it, dear sir, only to yourself. You have treated me not like a son, but like a friend. Can you be surprised that I should communicate to a friend all my thoughts and all my desires? Unless the friend approve them, let the father never know them; or at least let him know at the same time,

that however reasonable, however eligible, my scheme may appear to me, I would rather forget it for ever, than cause him the slightest uneasiness.

When I first returned to England, attentive to my future interest, you were so good as to give me hopes of a seat in parliament. This seat, it was supposed, would be an expense of fifteen hundred pounds. This design flattered my vanity, as it might enable me to shine in so august an assembly. It flattered a nobler passion; I promised myself that by the means of this seat I might be one day the instrument of some good to my country. But I soon perceived how little a mere virtuous inclination, unassisted by talents, could contribute towards that great end; and a very short examination discovered to me, that those talents had not fallen to my lot. Do not, dear sir, impute this declaration to a false modesty, the meanest species of pride. Whatever else I may be ignorant of, I think I know myself, and shall always endeavour to mention my good qualities without vanity, and my defects without repugnance. I shall say nothing of the most intimate acquaintance with his country and language, so absolutely necessary to every senator. Since they may be acquired, to allege my deficiency in them would seem only the plea of laziness. But I shall say with great truth, that I never possessed that gift of speech, the first requisite of an orator, which use and labour may improve, but which nature alone can bestow. That my temper, quiet, retired, somewhat reserved, could neither acquire popularity, bear up against opposition, nor mix with ease in the crowds of public life. That even my genius (if you will allow me any) is better qualified for the deliberate compositions of the closet than for the extemporary discourses of the parliament. An unexpected objection would disconcert me; and as I am incapable of explaining to others what I do not thoroughly understand myself, I should be meditating while I ought to be answering. I even want necessary prejudices of

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party and of nation. In popular assemblies it is often necessary to inspire them ; and never orator inspired well a passion which he did not feel himself. Suppose me even mistaken in my own character : to set out with the repugnance such an opinion must produce, offers but an indifferent prospect. But I hear you say, it is not necessary that every man should enter into parliament with such exalted hopes. It is to acquire a title the most glorious of any in a free country, and to employ the weight and consideration it gives in the service of one's friends. Such motives, though not glorious, yet are not dishonourable ; and if we had a borough in our command, if you could bring me in without any great expense, or if our fortune enabled us to despise that expense, then indeed I should think them of the greatest strength. But with our private fortune, is it worth while to purchase, at so high a rate, a title honourable in itself, but which I must share with every fellow that can lay out fifteen hundred pounds ? Besides, dear sir, a merchandise is of little value to the owner, when he is resolved not to sell it.

I should affront your penetration, did I not suppose you now see the drift of this letter. It is to appropriate to another use the sum with which you destined to bring me into parliament ; to employ it, not in making me great, but in rendering me happy. I have often heard you say yourself, that the allowance you had been so indulgent as to grant me, though very liberal in regard to your estate, was yet but small, when compared with the almost necessary extravagances of the age. I have indeed found it so, notwithstanding a good deal of economy, and an exemption from many of the common expenses of youth. This, dear sir, would be a way of supplying these deficiencies, without any additional expense to you. But I forbear. If you think my proposals reasonable, you want no entreaties to engage you to comply with them ; if otherwise, all will be without effect.

All that I am afraid of, dear sir, is, that I should

seem not so much asking a favour, as this really is, as exacting a debt. After all I can say, you will still remain the best judge of my good, and your own circumstances. Perhaps, like most landed gentlemen, an addition to my annuity would suit you better than a sum of money given at once; perhaps the sum itself may be too considerable. Whatever you shall think proper to bestow upon me, or in whatever manner, will be received with equal gratitude.

I intended to stop here; but as I abhor the least appearance of art, I think it will be better to lay open my whole scheme at once. The unhappy war which now desolates Europe will oblige me to defer seeing France till a peace. But that reason can have no influence upon Italy, a country which every scholar must long to see: should you grant my request, and not disapprove of my manner of employing your bounty, I would leave England this autumn, and pass the winter at Lausanne with M. de Voltaire and my old friends. The armies no longer obstruct my passage, and it must be indifferent to you whether I am at Lausanne or at London during the winter, since I shall not be at Beriton. In the spring I would cross the Alps, and after some stay in Italy, as the war must then be terminated, return home through France, to live happily with you and my dear mother. I am now two-and-twenty; a tour must take up a considerable time, and though I believe you have no thoughts of settling me soon, (and I am sure I have not,) yet so many things may intervene, that the man who does not travel early, runs a great risk of not travelling at all. But this part of my scheme, as well as the whole, I submit entirely to you.

Permit me, dear sir, to add, that I do not know whether the complete compliance with my wishes could increase my love and gratitude; but that I am very sure no refusal could diminish those sentiments with which I shall always remain, dear sir,

Your most dutiful and obedient son and servant,
E. GIBBON, junior

No. III.

MR MALLET TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

1761.

I COULD not procure you a ticket for the coronation, without putting you to the expense of ten guineas. But I now send you something much more valuable, which will cost you only a groat. When will your father or you be in town? Desire Becket to send me one of your books, well bound, for myself: all the other copies I gave away, as duke Desenary drunk out ten dozen of lord Bolingbroke's champagne in his absence—to your honour and glory. I need not tell you that I am,

Most affectionately,

The major's and your very humble servant,

D. MALLET.

Turn over, read, and be delighted.

Let your father too read.

J'AI lu avec autant d'avidité que de satisfaction le bon et agréable ouvrage, dont l'auteur m'a fait présent. Je parle comme si M. Gibbon ne m'avoit pas loué, et même un peu trop fort. J'ai lu le livre d'un citoyen du monde, d'un véritable homme de lettres, qui les aime pour elles mêmes, sans exception ni prévention; et qui joint à beaucoup d'esprit le bon sens plus rare que l'esprit, ainsi qu'une impartialité qui le rend juste et modeste, malgré l'impression qu'il a dû recevoir des auteurs sans nombre qu'il a lus, et très bien lus. J'ai donc dévoré ce petit ouvrage, auquel je désirerois de bon cœur une plus grande étendue, et que je voudrois faire lire à tout le monde.

Je témoigne aussi à my lady Hervey l'obligation que je lui ai, de m'avoir fait connoître un auteur qui prouve à chaque mot, que la littérature n'est ennemie l'ignorance et des travers, qui mérite d'avoir pour amis, et qui d'ailleurs honore et forge par l'usage que son esprit en sait

faire. Si j'étois plus savant, j'appuyerois sur le mérite des discussions, et sur la justesse des observations.

CAYLUS.

[TRANSLATION.]

I READ with as much eagerness as pleasure the excellent and agreeable work with which the author presented me. I speak as if Mr Gibbon had not praised me, and that too warmly. His work is that of a real man of letters, who loves them for their own sake, without exception or prejudice; and who unites with much talent the more precious gift of good sense, and an impartiality that displays his candour and justice, in spite of the bias that he must have received from the innumerable authors whom he has read and studied. I have therefore perused, with the greatest avidity, this little work; and wish that it was more extensive, and read universally.

I would also express my thanks to lady Hervey, for making me acquainted with an author who proves in every page that learning is hostile only to ignorance and prejudice; who deserves to have a Maty for his friend, and who adds honour and strength to our language by the use which he so ably makes of it. Were I more learned, I should dwell on the merit of the discussions, and the justness of the observations.

CAYLUS.

No. IV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BERITON.

DEAR MADAM,

Paris, February 12, 1763.

YOU remember our agreement,—short and frequent letters. The first part of the treaty you have no doubt of my observing. I think I ought not to leave you any of the second. *A propos* of treaty: our definitive one was signed here yesterday, and this morning the duke of Bridgewater and Mr Neville went for London with the news of it. The plenipo-

tentiaries sat up till ten o'clock in the morning at the ambassador of Spain's ball, and then went to sign this treaty, which regulates the fate of Europe.

Paris, in most respects, has fully answered my expectations. I have a number of very good acquaintance, which increase every day; for nothing is so easy as the making them here. Instead of complaining of the want of them, I begin already to think of making a choice. Next Sunday, for instance, I have only three invitations to dinner. Either in the houses you are already acquainted, you meet with people who ask you to come and see them, or some of your friends offer themselves to introduce you. When I speak of these connections, I mean chiefly for dinner and the evening. Suppers, as yet, I am pretty much a stranger to, and I fancy shall continue so; for Paris is divided into two species, who have but little communication with each other. The one, who is chiefly connected with the men of letters, dine very much at home, are glad to see their friends, and pass the evenings, till about nine, in agreeable and rational conversation. The others are the most fashionable, sup in numerous parties, and always play, or rather game, both before and after supper. You may easily guess which sort suits me best. Indeed, madam, we may say what we please of the frivolity of the French; but I do assure you, that in a fortnight passed at Paris, I have heard more conversation worth remembering, and seen more men of letters among the people of fashion, than I had done in two or three winters in London.

Amongst my acquaintance I cannot help mentioning M. Helvetius, the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit*. I met him at dinner at madame Geoffrin's, where he took great notice of me, made me a visit next day, has ever since treated me, not in a polite, but a friendly manner. Besides being a sensible man, an agreeable companion, and the worthiest creature in the world, he has a very pretty wife, an hundred thousand livres a year, and one of the best tables in

Paris. The only thing I dislike in him is the great attachment to, and admiration for, ****, whose character is indeed at Paris beyond anything you can conceive. To the great civility of this foreigner, who was not obliged to take the least notice of me, I must just contrast the behaviour of *****.

No. V.

MR GIBBON TO HIS FATHER.

DEAR SIR,

Paris, February 24, 1763.

I HAVE NOW passed nearly a month in this place, and I can say with truth that it has answered my most sanguine expectations. The buildings of every kind, the libraries, the public diversions, take up a great part of my time; and I have already found several houses where it is both very easy and very agreeable to be acquainted. Lady Hervey's recommendation to madame Geoffrin was a most excellent one. Her house is a very good one; regular dinners there every Wednesday, and the best company of Paris, in men of letters and people of fashion. It was at her house I connected myself with M. Helvetius, who, from his heart, his head, and his fortune, is a most valuable man.

At his house I was introduced to the baron d'Olbach, who is a man of parts and fortune, and has two dinners every week. The other houses I am known in are—the duchess d'Aiguillon's, madame la comtesse de Froulay's, madame du Bocage, madame Boyer, M. le marquis de Mirabeau, and M. de Forcemagne. All these people have their different merit; in some I meet with good dinners; in others, societies for the evening; and in all, good sense, entertainment, and civility; which, as I have no favours to ask, or business to transact with them, is sufficient for me. Their men of letters are as affable and communicative as I expected. My letters to them did me no harm, but were very little necessary. My book had been of

great service to me, and the compliments I have received upon it would make me insufferably vain, if I laid any stress on them. When I take notice of the civilities I have received, I must take notice too of what I have seen of a contrary behaviour. You know how much I always built upon the count de Caylus : he has not been of the least use to me. With great difficulty I have seen him, and that is all. I do not however attribute his behaviour to pride, or dislike to me, but solely to the man's general character, which seems to be a very odd one. De la Motte, Mrs Mallet's friend, has behaved very drily to me, though I have dined with him twice. But I can forgive him a great deal, in consideration of his having introduced me to M. d'Augny (Mrs Mallet's son.) Her men are generally angels or devils ; but here I really think, without being very prone to admiration, that she has said very little too much of him. As far as I can judge, he has certainly an uncommon degree of understanding and knowledge, and, I believe, a great fund of honour and probity. We are very much together, and I think our intimacy seems to be growing into a friendship. Next Sunday we go to Versailles ; the king's guard is done by a detachment from Paris, which is relieved every four days ; and as he goes upon this command, it is a very good occasion for me to see the palace. I shall not neglect, at the same time, the opportunity of informing myself of the French discipline.

The great news at present is the arrival of a very extraordinary person from the Isle of France in the East Indies. An obscure Frenchman, who was lately come into the island, being very ill, and given over, said, that before he died he must discharge his conscience of a great burden he had upon it, and declared to several people he was the accomplice of Damien, and the very person who held the horses. Unluckily for him, the man recovered after this declaration, was immediately sent prisoner to Paris, and is just landed at Port l'Orient, from whence he is daily expected

here, to unravel the whole mystery of that dark affair. This story (which at first was laughed at) has now gained entire credit, and I apprehend must be founded on real fact.

I am, dear sir, most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

No. VI.

MR GIBBON TO MR HOLROYD AT LAUSANNE.

Boromean Islands, May 16, 1764.

DEAR HOLROYD,

HURRY of running about, time taken up with seeing places, &c. &c. &c. are excellent excuses; but I fancy you will guess that my laziness and aversion to writing to my best friend are the real motives, and I am afraid you will have guessed right.

We are at this minute in a most magnificent palace, in the middle of a vast lake; ranging about suits of rooms without a soul to interrupt us, and secluded from the rest of the universe. We shall sit down in a moment to supper, attended by all the count's household. This is the fine side of the medal: turn to the reverse. We are got here wet to the skin; we have crawled about fine gardens which rain and fogs prevented our seeing; and if tomorrow does not hold up a little better, we shall be in some doubt whether we can say we have seen these famous islands. Guise says yes, and I say no. The count is not here; we have our supper from a paltry hedge alehouse, (excuse the bull,) and the servants have offered us beds in the palace, pursuant to their master's direction.

I hardly think you will like Turin; the court is old and dull; and in that country every one follows the example of the court. The principal amusement seems to be driving about in your coach in the evening, and bowing to the people you meet. If you go while the royal family is there, you have the addi-

tional pleasure of stopping to salute them every time they pass. I had that advantage fifteen times one afternoon. We were presented to a lady who keeps a public assembly; and a very mournful one it is; the few women that go to it are each taken up by their cicisbeo; and a poor Englishman, who can neither talk Piedmontois nor play at Faro, stands by himself, without one of their haughty nobility doing him the honour of speaking to him. You must not attribute this account to our not having staid long enough to form connections. It is a general complaint of our countrymen, except of lord * * * * who has been engaged for about two years in the service of a lady whose long nose is her most distinguishing fine feature. The most sociable women I have met with are the king's daughters. I chatted for about a quarter of an hour with them, talked about Lausanne, and grew so very free and easy that I drew my snuff-box, rapped it, took snuff twice, (a crime never known before in the presence-chamber,) and continued my discourse in my usual attitude of my body bent forwards, and my fore finger stretched out.* As it might however have been difficult to keep up this acquaintance, I chiefly employed my time in seeing places, which fully repaid me in pleasure the trouble of my journey. What entertained me the most was the museum and the citadel. The first is under the care of a M. Bartoli, who received us, without any introduction, in the politest manner in the world, and was of the greatest service to us, as I dare say he

* This attitude continued to be characteristic of Mr Gibbon, and an engraved representation of it was annexed to the first edition of his Memoirs; but having been considered by several persons as a very unfavourable likeness, (which it undoubtedly is,) and rather as a caricature of Mr Gibbon, it is now omitted: it is, however, certain, that Mr Gibbon did not consider it in that light: he gave it to lord Sheffield himself. In its place is substituted an engraving of the best likeness that exists of Mr Gibbon.

will be to you. The citadel is a stupendous work; and when you have seen the subterraneous part of it, you will scarcely think it possible such a place can ever be taken. As it is however a regular one, it does not pique my curiosity so much as those irregular fortifications hewn out of the Alps, as Exiles, Fenes-trelles, and the Brunette, would have done, could we have spared the time necessary. Our next stage from Turin was Milan, where we were mere spectators, as it was not worth while to endeavour at forming connections for so very few days. I think you will be surprised at the great church, but infinitely more so at the regiment of Baden, which is in the citadel. Such steadiness, such alertness, in the men, and such exactness in the officers, as exceeded all my expectations. Next Friday I shall see the regiment reviewed by general Serbelloni. Perhaps I may write a particular letter about it. From Milan we proceed to Genoa, and thence to Florence. You stare—but really we find it so inconvenient to travel like mutes, and to lose a number of curious things for want of being able to assist our eyes with our tongues, that we have resumed our original plan, and leave Venice for next year. I think I should advise you to do the same.

Milan, May 18th, 1764.

THE next morning was not fair, but however we were able to take a view of the islands, which, by the help of some imagination, we conclude to be a very delightful though not an enchanted place. I would certainly advise you to go there from Milan, which you may very well perform in a day and a half. Upon our return we found lord Tilney and some other English in their way to Venice. We heard a melancholy piece of news from them: Byng died at Bologna a few days ago of a fever. I am sure you will be all very sorry to hear it.

We expect a volume of news from you in relation to Lausanne, and in particular to the alliance of the duchess with the frog. Is it already concluded? How does the bride look after her great revolution? Pray embrace her and the adorable, if you can, in both our names; and assure them, as well as all the *Spring*,* that we talk of them very often, but particularly of a Sunday; and that we are so disconsolate, that we have neither of us commenced cicisbeos as yet, whatever we may do at Florence. We have drank the duchess's health, not forgetting the little woman, on the top of mount Cenis, in the middle of the Lago Maggiore, &c. &c. I expect some account of the said little woman. Who is my successor? I think Montagny had begun to supplant me before I went. I expect your answer at Florence, and your person at Rome, which the Lord grant. Amen.

No. VII.

MR GIBBON TO MR HOLROYD AT BERLIN.

DEAR HOLROYD,

Beriton, Oct. 31, 1765.

WHY did I not leave a letter for you at Marseilles? For a very plain reason: because I did not go to Marseilles. But, as you have most judiciously added, why did not I send one? Humph. I own that non-plusses me a little. However, hearken to my history. After revolving a variety of plans, and suiting them as well as possible to time and finances, Guise and I at last agreed to pass from Venice to Lyons, swim down the Rhone, wheel round the south of France, and embark at Bourdeaux. Alas! at Lyons I received letters which convinced me that I ought no longer to deprive my country of one of her greatest ornaments. Unwillingly I obeyed, left Guise to execute alone the

*The society of young ladies mentioned in the *Mémoires*

remainder of our plan, passed about ten delicious days at Paris, and arrived in England about the end of June. Guise followed me about two months afterwards, as I was informed by an epistle from him, which, to his great astonishment, I immediately answered. You perceive there is still some virtue amongst men. *Exempli gratia*, your letter is dated Vienna, October 12th, 1765; it made its appearance at Beriton, Wednesday evening, October 29th. I am at this present writing sitting in my library, on Thursday morning, between the hours of twelve and one. I have ventured to suppose you still at Berlin; if not, I presume you take care that your letters should follow you. This ideal march to Berlin is the only one I can make at present. I am under command: and were I to talk of a third sally as yet, I know some certain people who would think it just as ridiculous as the third sally of the renowned Don Quixote. All I ever hoped for was, to be able to take the field once more, after lying quiet a couple of years. I must own that your executing your tour in so complete a manner gives me a little selfish spleen. If I make a summer's escape to Berlin, I cannot hope for the companion I flattered myself with. I am sorry however I have said so much; but as it is difficult to increase your honour's proper notions of your own perfections, I will e'en let it stand. Indeed I owed you something for your account of the favourable reception my book has met with. I see there are people of taste at Vienna, and no longer wonder at your liking it. Since the court is so agreeable, a thorough reformation must have taken place. The stiffness of the Austrian etiquette, and the haughty magnificence of the Hungarian princes, must have given way to more civilized notions. You have (no doubt) informed yourself of the forces and revenues of the empress. I think (however unfashionably) we always esteemed her. Have you lost or improved

that opinion? Princes, like pictures, to be admired must be seen in their proper point of view, which is often a pretty distant one. I am afraid you will find it peculiarly so at Berlin.

I need not desire you to pay a most minute attention to the Austrian and Prussian discipline. You have been bit by a mad serjeant as well as myself; and when we meet, we shall run over every particular which we can approve, blame, or imitate. Since my arrival I have assumed the august character of major, received returns, issued orders, &c. &c. &c. I do not intend you shall have the honour of reviewing my troops next summer. Three-fourths of the men will be recruits; and during my pilgrimage discipline seems to have been relaxed. But I summon you to fulfil another engagement. Make me a visit next summer. You will find here a bad house, a pleasant country in summer, some books, and very little *strange* company. Such a plan of life for two or three months must, I should imagine, suit a man who has been for as many years struck from one end of Europe to the other like a tennis-ball. At least I judge of you by myself. I always loved a quiet, studious, indolent life; but never enjoyed the charms of it so truly as since my return from an agreeable but fatiguing course of motion and hurry. However, I shall hear of your arrival, which can scarcely be so soon as January 1766, and shall probably have the misfortune of meeting you in town soon after. We may then settle any plans for the ensuing campaign.

En attendant, (admire me, this is the only scrap of foreign lingo I have imported into this epistle—if you had seen that of Guise to me!)—let me tell you a piece of Lausanne news. Nanette Grand is married to lieutenant-colonel Prevost. Grand wrote to me; and by the next post I congratulated both father and daughter. There is exactness for you. The Curchod (name Necker) I saw at Paris. She was very fond and the husband particularly civil. Could

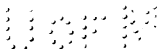
they insult me more cruelly? Ask me every evening to supper; go to bed, and leave me alone with his wife—what an impertinent security! It is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as ever, and much genteeler; seems pleased with her fortune rather than proud of it. I was (perhaps indiscreetly enough) exalting Nanette d'Illens's good luck and the fortune. What fortune? (said she, with an air of contempt)—not above twenty thousand livres a-year. I smiled, and she caught herself immediately.—“What airs I give myself in despising twenty thousand livres a-year, who a year ago looked upon eight hundred as the summit of my wishes!”

I must end this tedious scrawl. Let me hear from you: I think I deserve it. Believe me, dear Holroyd, I share in all your pleasures, and feel all your misfortunes. Poor Bolton!* I saw it in the newspaper. Is Ridley† with you? I suspect not: but if he is, assure him I do not forget him, though he does me. Adieu; and believe me most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON, junior.

* Theophilus Bolton, esq. a very amiable man, of considerable talents, descended from sir Richard Bolton, lord chancellor of Ireland in the reign of Charles I, and great nephew to Theophilus Bolton, archbishop of Cashel. He made the tour with major Ridley and Mr Holroyd from Lausanne as far as Naples. On the road from Rome to Cajeta he broke a blood vessel. After passing some time at Naples, the physicians recommended to him a sea voyage. Commodore Harrison most kindly took him and Mr Holroyd on board the Centurion man-of-war; and two days after their arrival in the harbour of Genoa, Mr Bolton died of a consumption.

† Son of sir Matthew Ridley, of Northumberland, baronet, major in the Welsh Fusileers. He had served during the seven years war under prince Ferdinand in Germany.



No. VIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. HOLROYD, ESQ.

DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, April 29, 1767.

I HAPPENED to-night to stumble upon a very odd piece of intelligence in the St James's Chronicle; it related to the marriage of a certain monsieur Olroy,* formerly captain of hussars. I do not know how it came into my head that this captain of hussars was not unknown to me, and that he might possibly be an acquaintance of yours. If I am not mistaken in my conjecture, pray give my compliments to him, and tell him from me, that I am at least as well pleased that he is married as if I were so myself. Assure him, however, that though as a philosopher I may prefer celibacy, yet as a politician I think it highly proper that the species should be propagated by the usual method; assure him even that I am convinced, that if celibacy is exposed to fewer miseries, marriage can alone promise real happiness, since domestic enjoyments are the source of every good. May such happiness, which is bestowed on few, be given to him; the transient blessings of beauty, and the more durable ones of fortune, good sense, and an amiable disposition!

I can easily conceive, and as easily excuse you, if you have thought mighty little this winter of your poor rusticated friend. I have been confined ever since Christmas, and confined by a succession of very melancholy occupations. I had scarcely arrived at Beriton, where I proposed staying only about a fortnight, when a brother of Mrs Gibbon's died unexpectedly, though after a very long and painful illness. We were scarcely recovered from the confusion such an event must produce in a family, when my father was taken dangerously ill, and with

the name was so spelt in the newspapers.

some intervals has continued so ever since. I can assure you, my dear Holroyd, that the same event appears in a very different light when the danger is serious and immediate; or when, in the gaiety of a tavern dinner, we affect an insensibility that would do us no great honour, were it real. My father is now much better; but I have since been assailed by a severe stroke—the loss of a friend. You remember, perhaps, an officer of our militia, whom I sometimes used to compare to yourself. Indeed, the comparison would have done honour to any one. His feelings were tender and noble, and he was always guided by them: his principles were just and generous, and he acted up to them. I shall say no more, and you will excuse my having said so much, of a man with whom you were unacquainted; but my mind is just now so very full of him that I cannot easily talk, or even think, of anything else. If I know you right, you will not be offended at my *weakness*.

What rather adds to my uneasiness is the necessity I am under of joining our militia the day after tomorrow. Though the lively hurry of such a scene might contribute to divert my ideas, yet every circumstance of it, and the place itself, (which was that of his residence,) will give me many a painful moment. I know nothing would better raise my spirits than a visit from you; the request may appear unseasonable, but I think I have heard you speak of *an uncle* you had near Southampton. At all events, I hope you will snatch a moment to write to me, and give me some account of your present situation and future designs. As you are now fettered, I should expect that you will not be such a *hic et ubique** as you have been since your arrival in England. I stay at Southampton from the first to the twenty-eighth of May,

* The motto of the regiment called Royal Foresters, in which Mr Holroyd had been captain.

and then propose making a short visit to town. if you are anywhere in the neighbourhood of it, you may depend upon seeing me. I shall then concert measures for seeing a little more of you next winter than I have lately done, as I hope to take a pretty long spell in town. I suppose Guise has often fallen in your way: he has never once written to me, nor I to him: in the country we want materials, and in London we want time. I ought to recollect, that you even want time to read my unmeaning scrawl. Believe, however, my dear Holroyd, that it is the sincere expression of a heart entirely yours.

No. IX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO GEORGE LEWIS SCOTT, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

As I know the value of your time, and as I have already borrowed some of it, I will not increase the debt by an idle preamble.

When I was in Switzerland, I contracted an intimate friendship with Mr Deyverdun, a young gentleman of one of the best families of that country. Misfortunes have since that time ruined his fortune, and he is at present in a situation very inadequate to his birth and merit, a clerk in one of our secretaries of state's offices. As the dull mechanic labour of his post still leaves him many leisure hours, he has formed a design of filling them by a work of which he is very capable, and which will perhaps do him some honour. Observing that, since the time Dr Maty discontinued his *Journal Britannique*, foreigners have often complained they had no tolerable account of English literature, he purposes supplying that deficiency. His understanding (I think I do not indulge a friend's partiality) is an exceeding good one, his taste is delicate, his knowledge extensive; he is cri-

tically acquainted with our language, and writes very well his own. I have promised him all the little assistance in my power, and cannot help thinking that the union of two friends of different nations, whose genius, language, and even prejudices, are so very opposite, may give a peculiar advantage to our works. Besides the extracts which form the basis of every journal, Mr Deyverdun proposes to introduce two other branches, which, though equally interesting, have been much more neglected,—the ‘History of the Theatre’ and of the ‘Polite Arts;’ and 2, ‘The Manners of Nations,’ at least as much of them as a foreigner can describe or strangers understand; characterizing anecdotes, occasional memoirs of singular men or things, &c., will serve to illustrate this part. The plan of the first volume is already formed, and the execution is in great forwardness. This volume will comprise a general review of the present year; (success, time, and the advice of our booksellers, must determine the periods of our future publications.) It will contain the following articles:—L’Histoire de Henri II, par my lord Lyttleton. 2. Le Nouveau Guide de Bath. 3. Histoire de la Société Civile, par Ferguson. 4. Conclusion des Mémoires de Miss Sidney Biddulph. 5. Témoignages Juifs et Payens en faveur du Christianisme, tome 4, par le docteur Lardner. 6. Lettres de my lady Wortley Montague. 7. De la Physique. 8. La Théologie. 9. Le Théâtre et Beaux Arts. 10. Les Mœurs. 11. Nouvelles Littéraires. You see, sir, what a medley we have thrown together; but various stomachs, we think, require various food. Some can support nothing but novels; others can digest even divinity; and here we have provided accordingly a therogia who will serve them in their own way.

We were, however, both very conscious that, though we were masters of no part of learning, yet there was one of the principal walks which we were peculiarly

strangers to, that of the physical and mathematical sciences. This great obstacle was very near destroying our rising scheme, till at last despair gave me a kind of courage, I believe I might as well call it temerity; at last, dear sir, I determined to apply to you. It would be impertinent in me to say that you are able to oblige us; I shall only say, that from my knowledge of your private character, I had some reason to hope that your inclination would be equal to your ability. What we desire are three or four abstracts every year of the best philosophical works that appear during that interval. To you, dear sir, the task would not be a difficult one. For your own amusement you will probably peruse those works, and ideas so familiar to you will be very easily thrown upon paper. You will determine much better than we can pretend to do what book would be the properest, if you should condescend to grace our first volume with so great an ornament; but I could wish you would introduce a short tableau of the present state of the physical and mathematical sciences in this country, as it is the method we have agreed to follow in most of our first extracts. Though I know, dear sir, that you perfectly understand the French language, yet, as you may not be accustomed to write in it, every piece you honour us with shall be carefully translated, and, if you desire it, submitted to your correction.

Such, dear sir, is our plan. I flatter myself it will in some degree interest you, and that you will assist us with your advice as well as your pen. At least I will venture to say that, if you are ashamed of the authors, you never will be ashamed of the men. My friend's undertaking is founded upon the most liberal principles. He is well apprized of the small profit to be made from his labour, and resolved to avoid equally flattery and abuse.

If your present occupations should not allow you

to assist us, I beg, dear sir, that you would keep our secret, and that you would believe me,

With great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

EDWARD GIBBON, Junior.

Beriton, Oct. 19th, 1767.

No. X.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO JOHN BAKER HOLROYD,
ESQ. SHEFFIELD PLACE.

DEAR HOLROYD,

London, 1772.

THE sudden change from the sobriety of Sheffield place to the irregularities of this town, and to the wicked company of Wilbraham,* Clark,† and Damer,‡ &c., having deranged me a good deal, I am forced to employ one of my secretaries to acquaint you with a piece of news I know nothing about myself. It is certain some extraordinary intelligence is arrived this morning from Denmark, and as certain that the levee was suddenly prevented by it. The particulars of that intelligence are variously and obscurely told. It is said, that the king had raised a little physician to the rank of minister and Ganymede; such a mad administration had so disgusted all the nobility, that the fleet and army had revolted, and shut up the king in his palace. *La reine se trouve mêlée là dedans*; and it is reported that she is confined, but whether in consequence of the insurrection, or some other cause, is not agreed. Such is the rough draft of an affair that nobody yet understands. *Embrassez, de ma part, madame, et le reste de la chère famille.*

GIBBON.

Et plus bas—WILBRAHAM, Sec.

* George Wilbraham, esq., of Delamere Lodge, Cheshire.

† Godfrey Clarke, esq., member for Derbyshire, who made the tour of Italy at the same time as Mr Gibbon.

‡ The hon. John Damer, eldest son of lord Milton, afterwards created earl of Dorchester.

No. XI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, 10 o'clock, Monday night, Feb. 3rd, 1772.

I LOVE, honour, and respect, every member of Sheffield place—even my great enemy Datch,* to whom you will please to convey my sincere wishes, that no *simpleton* may wait on him at dinner, that his wise papa may not shew him any pictures, and that his much wiser mamma may chain him hand and foot, in direct contradiction to Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights.

It is difficult to write news, because there is none. Parliament is perfectly quiet; and I think that Barré,† who is just now playing at whist in the room, will not have exercise of the lungs, except perhaps on a message much talked of, and soon expected, to recommend it to the wisdom of the House of Commons to provide a proper future remedy against the improper marriages of the younger branches of the royal family. The noise of Luttrell is subsided, but there was some foundation for it. The colonel's expenses in his bold enterprise were yet unpaid by government. The hero threatened, assumed the patriot, received a sop, and again sunk into the courtier. As to Denmark, it seems now that the king, who was totally unfit for government, has only passed from the hands of his queen wife to those of his queen mother-in-law. The former is said to have indulged a very *vague* taste in her amours. She would not be admitted into the Pantheon, whence the *gentlemen proprietors* exclude all beauty unless unspotted and immaculate (tautology, by the bye). The *gentlemen proprietors*, on the other hand, are friends and patrons of the leopard beauties. Advertising challenges have passed between the two great factions,

* The name by which John William, the son of Mr Holroyd, called himself.

† Colonel Barré.

and a bloody battle is expected Wednesday night. *Apropos*, the Pantheon, in point of ennui and magnificence, is the wonder of the eighteenth-century and of the British empire. Adieu.

No. XII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Boodle's, Saturday night, Feb. 8th, 1772.

THOUGH it is very late, and the bell tells me that I have not above ten minutes left, I employ them with pleasure in congratulating you on the late victory of our dear mamma the church of England. She had last Thursday seventy-one rebellious sons, who pretended to set aside her will on account of insanity: but two hundred and seventeen worthy champions, headed by lord North, Burke, Hans Stanley, Charles Fox, Godfrey Clarke, &c. though they allowed the the thirty-nine clauses of her testament were absurd and unreasonable, supported the validity of it with infinite humour. By the bye, Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy war by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard; his devotion cost him only about 500*l.* *per* hour—in all 11,000*l.* Gaby. lost 5000*l.* This is from the best authority. I hear too, but will not warrant it, that W. H., by way of paying his court to L. C., has lost this winter 12,000*l.* How I long to be ruined!

There are two county contests; sir Thomas Egerton and colonel Townley in Lancashire, after the county had for some time gone a-begging. In Salop, sir Watkin, supported by lord Gower, happened by a punctilio to disoblige lord Craven, who told us last night that he had not quite 9000*l.* a year in that county, and who has set up Pigot against him. You may suppose we all wish for Got Amighty* against that black devil.

I am sorry your journey is deferred. Compliments

* Alluding to the Welsh opinion that sir Watkin was in Wales nearly as great a personage.

to Dutch. As he is now in durance, great minds forgive their enemies, and I hope he may be released by this time.—Coming, sir. Adieu.

You see the princess of W. is gone. Hans Stanley says, it is believed the empress queen has taken the same journey.

No. XIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

London, Feb. 13th, 1772.

THE papers and plans arrived safe in town last night, and will be in your hands in their intact virgin state in a day or two. Consider them at leisure, if that word is known in the rural life. Unite, divide, but (above all) *raise*. Bring them to London with you: I wait your orders; nor shall I, for fear of tumbling, take a single step till your arrival, which, on many accounts, I hope will not be long deferred.

Clouds still hover over the horizon of Denmark. The public circumstances of the revolution are related, and I understand very exactly, in the foreign papers. The secret springs of it still remain unknown. The town indeed seems at present quite tired of the subject. The princess's death, her character, and what she left, engross the conversation. She died without a will; and as her savings were generally disposed of in charity, the small remains of her personal fortune will make a trifling object when divided among her children. Her favourite, the P. of B., very properly insisted on the king's immediately sealing up all the papers, to secure her from the idle reports which would be so readily swallowed by the great English monster. The business of lord and lady * * * * * is finally compromised by the arbitration of the chancellor and lord Camden. He gives her 1,200*l.* a year separate maintenance, and 1,500*l.* to set out with: but as her ladyship is now a new face, her husband, who has already bestowed on the public seventy

young beauties, has conceived a violent but hopeless passion for his chaste moiety. Her brother told me that he has now in his hands a counter-affidavit of countess Deschoff, in which she declares that she received a sum of money to swear the former, the contents of which are totally false! Such infamous conduct may blast her, but can never acquit the other. Lord Chesterfield is dying. County oppositions subside. Adieu. Entirely yours.

No. XIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

Feb. 21st, 1772.

* * * * *

HOWEVER, notwithstanding my indignation, I will employ five minutes in telling you two or three recent pieces of news.

1. Charles Fox is commenced patriot, and is already attempting to pronounce the words *country, liberty, corruption*, &c.; with what success, time will discover. Yesterday he resigned the admiralty. The story is, that he could not prevail on ministry to join with him in his intended repeal of the marriage act, (a favourite measure of his father, who opposed it from its origin,) and that Charles very judiciously thought lord Holland's friendship imported him more than lord North's.

2. Yesterday the marriage message came to both houses of parliament. You will see the words of it in the papers: and, thanks to the submissive piety of this session, it is hoped that the princes of the next generation will not find it so easy as their uncles have done, to expose themselves and burthen the public.

3. To-day the House of Commons was employed in a very odd way. Tommy Townshend moved, that the sermon of Dr Knowell, who preached before the House on the 30th of January, (*id est*, before the speaker and four members,) should be burnt by the common hangman, as containing arbitrary, tory, high-

flown doctrines. The House was nearly agreeing to the motion, till they recollected that they had already thanked the preacher for his excellent discourse, and ordered it to be printed. Knowell's bookseller is much obliged to the right honourable Tommy Townshend.

When do you come to town? I want money, and am tired of sticking to the earth by so many roots *Embrassez de ma part, &c.* Adieu. Ever yours.

No. XV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BERITON.

DEAR MADAM,

March 21st, 1772.

I HAVE advanced with some care and some success in gaining an idea of the Lenborough estate. The tenants are at will; and, from a comparison of my rents with the neighbouring ones, particularly lord * * * *, there is great probability that my estate is very much under-let. My friend Holroyd, who is a most invaluable counsellor, is strongly of that opinion. Sir * * * * is just come home. I am sorry to see many alterations, and little improvement. From an honest wild English buck he is grown a *philosopher*. Lord * * * * displeases everybody by the affectation of consequence: the young baronet disgusts no less by the affectation of wisdom. He speaks in short sentences, quotes Montaigne, seldom smiles, never laughs, drinks only water, professes to command his passions, and intends to marry in five months. The two lords, his uncle, as well as * * * *, attempt to shew him that such behaviour, even were it reasonable, does not suit this country. He remains incorrigible, and is every day losing ground in the good opinion of the public, which at his first arrival ran strongly in his favour. Deyverdun is probably on his journey to England, but is not yet come.

I am, dear madam, &c. &c. &c.

No. XVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

DEAR HOLROYD, Pallmall, May 16th, 1772.

I WISH you lived nearer, or even that you could pass a week at Beriton. When shall you be at Richmond? or would there be any *use* in my going down to Sheffield for a day or two? In you alone I put my trust, and without you I should be perplexed, discouraged, and frightened; for not a single fish has yet bit at the Lenborough bait.

I dined the other day with Mr Way at Boodle's. He told me, that he was just going down to Sheffield place. As he has probably unladen all the politics, and Mrs Way all the scandal of the town, I shall for *the present only* satisfy myself with the needful; among which I shall always reckon my sincere compliments to madame, and my profound respects for Mr Datch.

I am, dear Holroyd,
Truly yours.

It is confidently asserted that the emperor and the king of Prussia are to run for very deep stakes over the Polish course. If the news be true, I back Austria against the aged horse, provided little Laudohn rides the match.

N.B. Crossing and jostling allowed.

No. XVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, Oct. 13th, 1772.

I AM just arrived, as well as yourself, at my *dii penates*, but with very different intention. You will ever remain a bigot to those rustic deities; I propose to abjure them soon, and to reconcile myself to the Catholic church of London.

I am so happy, so exquisitely happy, at feeling so many mountains taken off my shoulders, that I can brave your indignation, and even the three-forked lightning of Jupiter himself. My reasons for taking so unwarrantable a step (approved of by Hugonin) were no unmanly despondency, (though it daily became more apparent how much the farm would suffer, both in reality and in reputation, by another year's management.). * * * * * I see pleasure but not use in a congress, therefore decline it. I know nothing as yet of a purchaser, and can only give you full and unlimited powers. If you think it necessary, let me know when you sell; but, however, do as you please.

I am sincerely glad to hear Mrs H. is better. I still think Bath would suit her. She, and you too, I fear, rather want the physic of the mind* than of the body. Tell me something about yourself. If, among a crowd of acquaintances, one friend can afford you any comfort, I am quite at your service. Once more, adieu.

No. XVIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD, Pallmall, Dec. 11th, 1772.

By this time I suppose you returned to the Elysian fields of Sheffield. The country (I do not mean any particular reflections on Sussex) must be vastly pleasant at this time of the year! For my own part, the punishment of my sins has at length overtaken me. On Thursday the third of December, in the present year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, between the hours of one and two in the afternoon, as I was crossing St James's church-yard, I stumbled, and *again sprained my foot*; but, alas!

* Mr Holroyd's then only son died about two months before this time.

after two days pain and confinement, a horrid monster, *ycleped the gout*, made me a short visit; and though he has now taken his leave, I am full of apprehension that he may have liked my company well enough to call again.

The parliament, after a few soft murmurs, is gone to sleep, to awake again after Christmas, safely folded in lord North's arms. The town is gone into the country, and I propose *visiting Sheffield* about Sunday se'nnight, if by that time I can get my household preparations (I have as good as taken lady Rous's lease in Bentinck street) in any forwardness. Shall I *angle for Batt*? No news stirring, except the duchess of G.'s pregnancy certainly declared. Yours sincerely.

No. XIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Boodle's, Ten o'clock, Thursday Evening, Dec. 1772.

DEAR HOLROYD,

My schemes with regard to you have been entirely disappointed. The business that called me to town was not ready before the 20th of last month, and the same business has kept me here till now. I have however a very strong inclination to eat a Christmas mince-pie with you; and, let me tell you, that inclination is no small compliment. What are the trees and waters of Sheffield place, compared with the comfortable smoke, lazy dinners, and inflammatory Junius's, which we can every day enjoy in town? You have seen the last Junius? He calls on the distant legions to march to the capitol, and free us from the tyranny of the prætorian guards. I cannot answer for the ghost of the *hic et ubique*, but the Hampshire militia are determined to keep the peace for fear of a broken head. After all, do I mean to make you a visit next week? Upon my soul, I cannot tell. I tell every body that I shall: I know that I cannot pass the

week with any man in the world with whom the pleasure of seeing each other will be more sincere or more reciprocal. Yet, *entre nous*, I do not believe that I shall be able to get out of this town before you come into it. At all events I look forwards, with great impatience, to Bruton street* and the Romans.† Believe me most truly yours.

No. XX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

January 12, 1773.

LENBOROUGH is no more! Lord ***** acted like a Jew, and I dare say now repents it. In his room * * * found me a better man,—a rich, brutish, honest, horse-dealer, who has got a great fortune by serving the cavalry. On Thursday he saw Lenborough, on Friday came to town with ***** , and this morning at nine o'clock we struck at 20,000*l*. after a very hard battle. As times go, I am not dissatisfied. * * * and the new lord of Lenborough (by name Lovegrove) dined with me; and though we did not speak the same language, yet by the help of signs, such as that of putting about the bottle, the natives seemed well satisfied.

The whole world is going down to Portsmouth, where they will enjoy the pleasure of smoke, noise, heat, bad lodgings, and expensive reckonings. For my own part, I have firmly resisted importunity, declined parties, and mean to pass the busy week in the soft retirement of my *bocage* de Bentinck street. Yesterday the East India company positively refused the loan: a noble resolution, could they get money anywhere else. They are violent; and it was moved, and the motion heard with some degree of approba-

* Where Mr Holroyd's family passed a winter.

† The Roman club.

tion, that they should instantly abandon India to lord North, Sujah Dowlah, or the Devil, if he chose to take it. Adieu.

No. XXI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

Boodle's, May 11, 1773.

I AM full of worldly cares, anxious about the great twenty-fourth, plagued with the Public Advertiser, distressed by the most dismal dispatches from Hugonin. Mrs Lee claims a million of repairs, which will cost a million of money.

The House of Commons sat late last night. Burgoyne made some spirited motions—"That the territorial acquisitions in India belonged to the state (that was the word); that grants to the servants of the company (such as jaghires) were illegal; and that there would be no true repentance without restitution." Wedderburne defended the nabobs with great eloquence, but little argument. The motions were carried without a division; and the hounds go out again next Friday. They are in high spirits; but the more sagacious ones have no idea they shall kill. Lord North spoke for the inquiry, but faintly and reluctantly. Lady * * * is said to be in town at her mother's, and a separation is unavoidable; but there is nothing certain. Adieu. Sincerely yours.

No. XXII.

MR WHITAKER TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

I THANK you very cordially for your letter of criticisms upon Fingal and myself. It is such an one as a friend should write, and I wish to receive. And I cannot but observe, that our acquaintance, so sensibly and properly begun, seems for that reason to promi^r

a much longer continuance than the customary intimacies of the world.

Your remark upon the dramatic poem of Comala struck me very strongly upon my first reading it. It is quite new, and equally acute and ingenious. The elder son of Severus was *not* denominated Caracalla, at the time of his father's or his own expedition into Caledonia. And yet, perhaps, in the fond credulity of a man that admires the poems of Ossian, and has built too much upon them to allow them to be materially affected by any interpolations, I see the objection, as I reflect more upon it, losing gradually its force, and at last resolving into nothing.

It proceeds upon a supposition that, if not true itself, makes the other useless. This is, That the poems in general, and Comala in particular, were either written at the time of the transactions recorded in them, or with a sacred regard to the names then borne by the agents. And this I apprehend not to be really the case. At least, it cannot be proved. And, till it is, the objection (I think) has nothing to rest upon. That the poems in general were not written at the time, is plain from a variety of circumstances, in which the author, like our Milton, full of his own feelings in the blindness and solitude of age, frequently leaves his subject, and comes home, as it were, to his own business and bosom. And that this of Comala was not, is demonstrable, because the author was not then born perhaps, and was certainly in his infancy only. This poem, therefore, like all the rest, was written many years after the fact, and probably, like them, in the later stages of Ossian's life; certainly not till the middle period of it, when the fervours of the youthful warrior were tempered by years into the steadier glow of manhood and poetry. He *then* appears as a renowned bard, the well-known voice of Cona. And then, employing the hours of peaceful inactivity in composing his poems, he would naturally, I suppose, make use of the names, what-

ever the actors might have borne at the time, that were most familiar to his countrymen when he wrote. This would certainly be his mode of acting, I think; and, if the name of Antoninus had been sunk for years in that of Caracalla, the poet would be *obliged* indeed to make a sort of poetical anachronism, and use the latter appellation instead of the former.

That the name of Caracalla was the general one attributed to the son of Severus in the empire, and consequently by the nations bordering upon it, is plain, I think, from its transmission to the present times, and the popular use of it over all Europe. The concurrence of all modern writers in the name must have resulted from some common principle of agreement, the popularity and familiarity of it among them. And accordingly Bede, who mentions the emperor by the title of Bassianus and Antoninus in one place, speaks of him in another under the name of Antoninus cognomento Caracalla (p. 20. Smith.) This therefore being his popular title, when Ossian wrote, he would naturally use it in his poems. The name of Bassianus was never known probably among the Caledonians. That of Antoninus would be too indistinct, and not point out the person intended with sufficient particularity. But that of Caracalla would answer every difficulty: it was at once popular and specific; and the anticipation was of little moment in itself, and in the eye of poetry, especially, of none at all.

This seems to me a just and fair account of that little anachronism, if it can be so called, which your eye, my friend, has first found out in the poems of Ossian. And this comes directly to the point, I think, and without any acknowledgment of interpolations in them. Could such be proved, we must give up the authenticity of the poems as to every historical purpose. Had such been made, they must have detected themselves: and we have sufficient authority to say, that no such were made. "On Mr Macpherson's return from the Highlands, with the poems in their

original state," says Dr Blair, "he set himself to translate under the eye of some who were acquainted with the Gallic language, and looked into his manuscripts; and by a large publication afterwards made an appeal to all the natives of the Highlands and islands of Scotland, whether he had been faithful to his charge, and done justice to their well-known and favourite poems." The doctor accordingly informs us, that he had applied by letters himself to several persons of credit and honour, who were natives of the Highlands and isles, and well acquainted with the poems and language, desiring to know their real opinion of the translation; and that not one of them "insinuates the most remote suspicion, that Mr Macpherson has either forged or *adulterated* any one of the poems he has published." The doctor then enters into a detail of testimonies which, I think, carry the highest conviction with them, concerning a point which, at other times, I have been a little inclined to doubt—the real accuracy and strict fidelity of the translator. And the cursory reading of these evidences now has had such an effect upon my mind, that I am fully persuaded they must have a great one upon an understanding like yours, sceptical perhaps, but argumentative, hesitating in its assent, but not from wild surmises or airy suspicions, but from doubts, reasonable though perhaps not just, and objections grounded though not sufficient.

This subject has taken up more of my letter than I originally intended it should, and I hasten from Ossian to myself. Your judgment concerning my attempt to rescue the character and actions of Arthur from the accumulated shade of 1200 years, as it is the result of a careful and attentive perusal, has gratified the spirit of authorship about me very much. As you have shewn, by pointing out some of the faults in the work, that you are superior to the usual mode of treating authors, I lay the greater stress upon it; and as you had taken a different route in your own work,

I lay still greater. You think however that I too peremptorily censured Dr Hurd with regard to his asserted origin of chivalry, and that indeed my origin of it is not so just as his. As to the former, I am ready to own, and I do voluntarily acknowledge, that there is a vein of presumptuousness and decisiveness running throughout the whole of the first as well as the second volume, which (after I had published the first) I stood amazed at on a review; and can only account for my being betrayed into it, by the natural sanguineness of my temper, heightened by the real or supposed discoveries that I had made, and venting itself uncorrected in the solitude of a study. And I corrected it in my second edition of the first volume, that I published last winter, and have also corrected it some weeks ago in that copy of the second which I am re-preparing for the press. But the censure itself (if it may be called a censure) seems to me to be just. You think, that the whole argument for my placing the origin of chivalry in the age of Arthur rests upon this, that his warriors shared with him the dangers of battle and the feast of victory: but I apprehend that it does not. I have noted, that a military order appears to have existed among Arthur's knights, from the continuance of it near one hundred years after his death (p. 533 and 536); and this I think entirely precludes your objection and Dr Hurd's hypothesis.

What you observe concerning the enthusiasm of my style and sentiments in the religious part of the work, is more just, I think. That of the style is the natural operation of my over-vivacity when I wrote it, near five years ago, raised and coloured by what (I hope) I shall ever retain, my unbounded admiration of the Christian system. But I had mellowed and softened both in my corrected copy, before I received yours, and have thrown in some additional softenings since. I wish to write like a man who is deeply impressed with the sensibilities of religion; and I have even the fond desire of speaking usefully to the heart,

when I am generally writing only to the head. But I do not want to counteract my own purposes. I know the philosophic air of coldness with which the present age affects to receive any notices of religion: and some prudential deference must be paid to the irreligious humour. You think that I have not paid enough;—and so I think. The monkish bigotry of the Saxon kings, which you note to be touched with too gentle an hand, and which I think was not touched at all, I have now, in consequence of your letter, animadverted upon in that sort of transitory manner however which alone was suited to the design of the paragraph, and the turn of the sentiments. My “rough treatment of Plutarch,” though tolerably gentle, I think, I have softened still more, on the credit of your hint: and my rougher of Mr Hume will be discarded, not perhaps for less severity, but for greater gentleness. All that relates to him will be thrown together into the Appendix, be greatly enlarged, and so form a regular criticism for the Saxon period. And the remarks will be written in a more critical and historical manner. My treatment of Socrates, which you think harsh, seems to me highly complimentary. Complimentary it certainly is, with regard to his general character. And the only supposable harshness is, that he is said to have lived and died a polytheist.

The avarice and ambition of the Saxon clergy, you think, I have also touched too gently; and I did not mean to touch it at all. All that I have said relates merely to the emoluments and honours conferred upon them: and do those necessarily imply avarice, or these ambition, in the receivers? I own that my own work would have been better adapted to the taste of many in the present time, if I had, with one of Mr Hume’s superior airs, treated the clergy very freely; inveighed against ambition in them, and yet considered it as the great stimulus to virtuous actions in the laity; and branded them for an avarice which

was founded only in the surmises of an ungenerous suspicion. But surely it does not become any man of sentiment and spirit to write in the strain of popular prejudice, and to sacrifice the praises of future generations to the applause of the present. The time will soon come, when this momentary vapour will give way to others, be lost and forgotten in the common mass, or be remembered only for a while, because of the odd and fantastic shapes that it assumed. And this will serve equally as my apology for the assertion which seems so striking to you, that of the divine institution of tythes. They appear to me to be as divine now as they are acknowledged to have been at first: and I see not how the argument that is urged in the text for their divinity, can possibly be overthrown.* In condescension however to the world, I have struck out the whole paragraph, in the notes upon Mr Hume, in which the subject was gone over more formally again; and I leave the whole to stand upon what is said in p. 790, 791.

I have thus replied more largely than I at first intended to your very obliging letter, sir; and I should sooner have acknowledged the favour, had I not been deeply engaged in revising, correcting, and enlarging, my second volume for the press. This has fully employed me since my arrival in the country, and will take up all my time, I suppose, till my return. In the meanwhile I hope you are engaged in the usefuller business of preparing your history for the public: no time, I think, should be lost, in justice to yourself as well as the public; and I should have been glad, if I

* It is no small reproach to the human understanding, that a man of Mr Whitaker's abilities should maintain such opinions. It was supposed, to the credit of the English clergy, that scarcely one of them in this enlightened age believed in, or insisted on, the *divinity* of tythes. Their divinity is surely now no more acknowledged than that of all those laws of Moses contained in the Levitic Code; which were abolished on the introduction of Christianity. S.

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could have been of half the service to you in it, that you have been of to me.

When your favour arrived, I had been three or four days wishing to have some opportunity of writing to you, but could not think of any but our old subjects. Your letter happily delivered me from the embarrassment; and I hope to hear speedily from you again. I should be very sorry to have our acquaintance, and (I hope I may add) our friendship, even suspended for the long interval of my absence from London: and we shall meet there, I trust, on my return, as old friends that know and therefore value each other. In that confidence I remain, dear sir,

Your favoured and obedient friend and servant,

J. WHITAKER.

P.S. Salmasius's derivation of our clerical cassocks from the Gaulish *caracallæ*, I think, is one of those wild vagaries of etymology that have so greatly discredited the science. *Cassock* is *casul* in Armorick, a priest's cope, and *casul* and *casog* in Welsh and Irish, a cassock.

Manchester, July 20, 1773.

No. XXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. HOLROYD, ESQ. AT
EDINBURGH.

DEAR HOLROYD, Bentinck street, Aug. 7, 1773.

I BEG ten thousand pardons for not being dead, as I certainly ought to be. But such is my abject nature, that I had rather live in Bentinck street, attainted and convicted of the sin of laziness, than enjoy your applause either at old Nick's or even in the Elysian Fields. After all, could you expect that I should honour with my correspondence a wild barbarian of the Bogs of Erin? Had the natives intercepted my letter, the terrors occasioned by such unknown magic characters might have been fatal to you. But now

you have escaped the fury of their hospitality, and are arrived among a cee-vi-leezed nation, I may venture to renew my intercourse.

You tell me of a long list of dukes, lords, and chieftains of renown to whom you are introduced; were I with you, I should prefer one *David* to them all. When you are at Edinburgh, I hope you will not fail to visit the sty of that fattest of Epicurus's hogs, and inform yourself whether there remains no hope of its recovering the use of its right paw. There is another animal of *great*, though not perhaps of *equal*, and certainly not of *similar* merit, one Robertson; has he almost created the new world? Many other men you have undoubtedly seen, in the country where you are at present, who must have commanded your esteem: but when you return, if you are not very honest, you will possess great advantages over me in any dispute concerning Caledonian merit.

Boodle's and Atwood's are now no more. The last stragglers, and Godfrey Clarke in the rear of all, are moved away to their several castles; and I now enjoy, in the midst of London, a delicious solitude. My library, Kensington gardens, and a few parties with new acquaintance who are chained to London, (among whom I reckon Goldsmith and sir Joshua Reynolds,) fill up my time, and the monster *Ennui* preserves a very respectful distance. By the bye, your friends Batt, sir John Russell, and Lascelles, dined with me one day before they set off; for I sometimes give the prettiest little dinner in the world. But all this composure draws near its conclusion. About the sixteenth of this month Mr Eliot carries me away, and after picking up Mrs Gibbon at Bath, sets me down at Port Eliot: there I shall certainly remain six weeks, or, in other words, to the end of September. My future motions, whether to London, Derbyshire, or a longer stay in Cornwall, (pray is not "motion to stay" rather in the Hibernian style?) will depend on the life of Port Eliot, the time of the

meeting of parliament, and perhaps the impatience of Mr Lovegrove, lord of Lenborough. One of my pleasures in town I forgot to mention—the unexpected visit of Deyverdun, who accompanies his young lord (very young indeed!) on a two months' tour to England. He took the opportunity of the earl's going down to the duke of Chandos's, to spend a fortnight (nor do I recollect a more pleasant one) in Bentinck street. They are now gone together into Yorkshire, and I think it doubtful whether I shall see him again before his return to Leipsic. It is a melancholy reflection, that while one is plagued with acquaintance at the corner of every street, real friends should be separated from each other by unsurmountable bars, and obliged to catch at a few transient moments of interview. I desire that you and my lady (whom I most respectfully greet) would take your share of that very new and acute observation, not so large a share indeed as my Swiss friend, since nature and fortune give *us* more frequent opportunities of being together. You cannot expect news from a desert, and such is London at present. The papers give you the full harvest of public intelligence; and I imagine that the eloquent nymphs of Twickenham* communicate all the transactions of the polite, the amorous, and the marrying world. The great pantomime of Portsmouth was universally admired; and I am angry at my own laziness in neglecting an excellent opportunity of seeing it. Foote has given us "The Bankrupt," a serious and sentimental piece, with very severe strictures on the licence of scandal in attacking private characters. Adieu. Forgive and epistolize me. I shall not believe you sincere in the former, unless you make Bentinck street your inn. I fear I shall be gone; but Mrs Ford† and the parrot will be proud to receive you and my lady after your long peregrination, from which I expect great improve-

* Miss Cambridges.

† His housekeeper.

ments. Has she got the brogue upon the tip of her tongue? *

No. XXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD, Port Eliot, Sept. 10th, 1773.

By this time you have surely finished your tour, touched at Edinburgh, where you found a letter, which you have not answered, and are now contemplating the beauties of the Weald of Sussex. I shall demand a long and particular account of your peregrinations, but will excuse it till we meet; and for the present expect only a short memorandum of your health and situation, together with that of my much-honoured friend Mrs Holroyd. A word too, if you please, concerning father and sister; to the latter I enclose a receipt from Mrs Gibbon, who is now with me at Port Eliot.

Blind as you accuse me of being to the beauties of nature, I am wonderfully pleased with this country. Of her three dull notes, *ground*, *plants*, and *water*, Cornwall possesses the first and last in very high perfection. Think of a hundred solitary streams peacefully gliding between amazing cliffs on one side, and rich meadows on the other, gradually swelling by the aid of the tide into noble rivers, successively losing themselves in each other, and all at length terminating in the harbour of Plymouth, whose broad expanse is irregularly *dotted* with two-and-forty line of battle ships. In plants indeed we are deficient; and though all the gentlemen now attend to posterity, the country will for a long time be very naked. We have spent several days agreeably enough in little parties; but in general our time rolls away in complete uniformity. Our landlord possesses neither a

* Mr and Mrs Holroyd made a tour to Ireland and Scotland this summer.

pack of hounds, nor a stable of running horses, nor a large farm, nor a good library. The last only could interest me; but it is singular that a man of fortune, who chooses to pass nine months of the year in the country, should have none of them.

According to our present design, Mrs Gibbon and myself return to Bath about the beginning of next month. I shall probably make but a short stay with her, and defer my Derbyshire journey till another year. Sufficient for the summer is the evil thereof, viz. one distant country excursion. Natural inclination, the prosecution of my great work, and the conclusion of my Lenborough business, plead strongly in favour of London. However I desire, and one always finds time for what one really desires, to visit Sheffield place before the end of October, should it only be for a few days. I know several houses where I am invited to think myself at home, but I know no other where I seem inclined to accept of the invitation. I forgot to tell you, that I have declined the publication of lord Chesterfield's letters. The public will see them, and, upon the whole, I think with pleasure; but the family were strongly bent against it; and especially on Deyverdun's account, I deemed it more prudent to avoid making them my personal enemies.

No. XXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bentinck street, Dec. 16th, 1773.

To the vulgar eye of an idle man, London is empty; but I find many pleasant companions, both dead and alive. Two or three days ago I dined at Atwood's with a very select party. Lord G. Germaine was of it, and we communed a long time. You know lord Holland is paying Charles's debts. They amount to 140,000*l*. At a meeting of the cre-

ditors, his agent declared that, after deducting 6000*l.* a-year settled on Ste,* and a decent provision for his old age, the residue of his wealth amounted to no more than 90,000*l.* The creditors stared, till Mr Powell declared that he owed everything to the noble lord; that *he happened* to have 50,000*l.* in long annuities, and begged that he might be permitted to supply the deficiency. How generous! Yet there are people who say the money only stood in his name. My brother Ste's son is a second Messiah, said Charles the other day. How so? Because born for the destruction of the Jews.

No. XXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

January 29th, 1774.

I AM now getting acquainted with authors, managers, &c. good company to know, but not to live with. Yesterday I dined at the British coffee-house with Garrick, Coleman, Goldsmith, Macpherson, John Hume, &c. I am at this moment come from Coleman's "Man of Business." We dined at the Shakspeare, and went in a body to support it. Between friends, though we got a verdict for our client, his cause was but a bad one. It is a very confused miscellany of several plays and tales; sets out brilliantly enough, but as we advance the plot grows thicker, the wit thinner, till the lucky fall of the curtain preserves us from total chaos.

Bentinck street has visited Welbeck street. Sappho is very happy that she is there yet: on Sheffield place she squints with regret and gratitude. Mamma consulted me about buying coals; we cannot get any round ones. Quintus is gone to head the civil war. Of Mrs **** I have nothing to say. I have got my

* The Hon. Stephen Fox, eldest son of lord Holland.

intelligence for insuring, and will immediately get the preservative against fire. Foster has sent me eight-and-twenty pair of Paris silk stockings, with an intimation that my lady wished for half-a-dozen. They are much at her service ; but if she will look into David Hume's Essay on National Characters, she will see that I durst not offer them to a queen of Spain. *Sachez qu'une reine d'Espagne n'a point de jambes.* Adieu

No. XXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

1774.

WE have conquered : *** was amazed at the tempest just ready to break over his head. He does not desire to go to law, wishes to live in peace, has no complaints to make, hopes for a little indulgence. *Hugonin is now in the attitude* of St Michael trampling upon Satan ; he holds him down, till Andrews has prepared *a little chain of adamant* to bind the foul fiend. In return, receive my congratulation on your Irish victory. Batt told me yesterday, as from good authority, that administration designed a second attempt this session ; but to-day I have it from much better, that they always discouraged it, and that it was *totally an Hibernian scheme*. You remark that I saw Batt. He passed two hours with me ; a pleasant man ! He and sir John Russell dine with me *next week* : you will have both their portraits ; the originals are engaged.

No. XXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

February, 1774.

DID you get down safe and early ? Is my lady in good spirits and humour ? You do not deserve that

she should, for hurrying her away. Does Maria coquet with Divedown? * Adieu. Bentinck street looks very dismal. You may suppose that nothing very important can have occurred since you left town : but I will send you some account of America after Monday, though indeed my anxiety about an old manor takes away much of my attention from a new continent. The mildness of Godfrey Clarke is roused into military fury; he is but an old Tory, and you only suppose yourself an old Whig. I alone am a true Englishman, Philosopher, and Whig.

No. XXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Boodle's, Wednesday Evening, March 16th, 1774.

I WAS this morning with * * *. He was positive that the attempt to settle the preliminaries of arbitration by letters, would lead us on to the middle of the summer, and that a meeting was the only practicable measure. I acquiesced, and we blended his epistle and yours into one, which goes by this post. If you can contrive to suit it to your Oxford journey, your presence at the meeting would be received as the descent of a guardian angel.

Very little that is satisfactory has transpired of America. On Monday lord North moved for leave to bring in a bill to remove the customs and courts of justice from Boston to New Salem; a step so detrimental to the former town, as must soon reduce it to your own terms; and yet of so mild an appearance, that it was agreed to without a division, and almost without a debate. Something more is however intended, and a committee is appointed to inquire into the general state of America. But administration keep their secret as well as that of free-

* Rev. Dr Dive Downes.

masonry, and, as Hippley Coxe profanely suggests, for the same reason.

Don't you remember that in our pantheon walks we admired the *modest beauty* of Mrs *****? *Eh bien*, alas! she is * * *. You ask me with whom? With * * *, of the guards; both the *****'s; * * *, a steward of *****'s, her first love, and half the town besides. A meeting of *****'s friends assembled about a week ago, to consult of the best method of acquainting him with his frontal honours. Edmund Burke was named as the orator, and communicated the transaction in a most eloquent speech.

N.B. The same lady, who at public dinners appeared to have the most delicate appetite, was accustomed in her own apartment to feast on pork steaks and sausages, and to swill porter till she was dead drunk. * * * is abused by the * * * family, has been bullied by * * *, and can prove himself a cornuto, to the satisfaction of every one but a court of justice. Oh rare matrimony!

No. XXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

March 29th, 1774.

America.—Had I written Saturday night, as I once intended, fire and sword, oaths of allegiance and high treason tried in England, in consequence of the refusal, would have formed my letter. Lord North, however, opened a most lenient prescription last night; and the utmost attempt towards a new settlement seemed to be no more than investing the governors with a greater share of executive power, nomination of civil officers, (judges, however, for life,) and some regulations of juries. The Boston port bill passed the Lords last night; some lively conversation, but no division.

Bentinck street.—Rose Fuller was against the Boston

port bill, and against his niece's going to Boodle's masquerade. He was laughed at in the first instance, but succeeded in the second. Sappho and Fanny very indifferent (as mamma says) about going. They seem of a different opinion. Adieu.

No. XXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

April 2d, 1774.

You owe me a letter; so this extra goes only to acquaint you with a misfortune that has just happened to poor Clarke, and which he really considers as such—the loss of a very excellent father. The blow was sudden; a thin little man, as abstemious as a hermit, was destroyed by a stroke of apoplexy in his coach, as he was going to dinner. He appeared perfectly well, and only two days before had very good-naturedly dined with us at a tavern, a thing he had not done for many years before. I am the only person Clarke wishes to see, except his own family; and I pass a great part of the day with him. A line from you would be kindly received.

Great news, you see, from India. Tanjour four hundred thousand pounds to the company. Suja Dowla six hundred thousand. Tyger Roch is certainly got off from the Cape to Mauritius in a French ship. Adieu.

No. XXXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

April 13th, 1774.

At length I am a little more at liberty. Godfrey Clarke went out of town this morning. Instead of going directly into Derbyshire, where he would have been overwhelmed with visits, &c. he has taken his

sister, brother, and aunts, to a villa near Farnham, in which he has the happiness of having no neighbourhood. If my esteem and friendship for Godfrey had been capable of any addition, it would have been very much increased by the manner in which he felt and lamented his father's death. He is now in very different circumstances than before; instead of an easy and ample allowance, he has taken possession of a great estate, with low rents and high incumbrances. I hope the one may make amends for the other: under your conduct I am sure they would, and I have freely offered him your assistance, in case he should wish to apply for it.

In the meantime I must not forget my own affairs, which seem to be covered with inextricable perplexity. * * *, as I mentioned about a century ago, promised to see * * * and his attorney, and to oil the wheels of the arbitration. As yet I have not heard from him. I have some thoughts of writing *myself* to the jockey, stating the various steps of the affair, and offering him, with polite firmness, the *immediate* choice of Chancery or arbitration.

For the time, however, I forgot all these difficulties, in the present enjoyment of Deyverdun's company; and I glory in thinking that, although my house is small, it is just of a sufficient size to hold my real friends, male and *female*; among the latter my lady holds the very first place.

We are all quiet.—American business is suspended and almost forgot. The other day we had a brisk report of a Spanish war. It was said they had taken one of our Leeward islands. It since turns out that we are the invaders, but the invasion is trifling.

Bien obligé non (at present) for your invitation. I wish my lady and you would come up to our masquerade the third of May. The finest thing ever seen. We sup in a transparent temple that costs four hundred and fifty pounds.

No. XXXIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

April 21st, 1774.

I BEGIN to flag, and though you already reproach me as a bad correspondent, I much fear that I shall every week become a more hardened sinner. Besides the occasional obstructions of Clarke and Deyverdun, I must entreat you to consider, with your usual candour, 1. The aversion to epistolary conversation, which it has pleased the dæmon to implant in my nature. 2. That I am a very fine gentleman, a subscriber to the masquerade, where you and my lady ought to come, and am now writing at Boodle's, in a fine velvet coat, with ruffles of my lady's choosing, &c. 3. That the aforesaid fine gentleman is likewise an historian; and in truth, when I am writing a page, I do not only think it a sufficient reason for delay, but even consider myself as writing for you, and that, much more to the purpose than if I were sending you the tittle tattle of the town, of which indeed there is none stirring. With regard to America, the minister seems moderate, and the house obedient.

* * * 's last letter, by some unaccountable accident, had never reached me; so that your's, in every instance, amazed me. I immediately dispatched to him groans and approbation. * * *, however, gives me very little uneasiness. I see that he is a bully, and that I have a stick. But the cursed business of Lenborough, in the midst of study, dissipation, and friendship, at times almost distracts me. I am surely in a worse situation than before I sold the estate, and what distresses me is, that

His ego nec metas rerum, nec tempora pono.—

Both Deyverdun and Clarke wish to be remembered to you. The former, who has more taste for the

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country than * * * *, could wish to visit you, but he sets out in a few days for the continent with lord Middleton. Adieu.

No. XXXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR HOLROYD,

May 4th, 1774.

LAST night was the triumph of Boodle's. Our masquerade cost two thousand guineas; a sum that might have fertilized a province (I speak in your own style) vanished in a few hours, but not without leaving behind it the fame of the most splendid and elegant *fête* that was perhaps ever given in a seat of the arts and opulence. It would be as difficult to describe the magnificence of the scene, as it would be easy to record the humour of the night. The one was above, the other below, all relation. I left the Pantheon about five this morning, rose at ten, took a good walk, and returned home to a more rational entertainment of Batt, sir John Russell, and Lascelles, who dined with me. They have left me this moment; and were I to enumerate the things said of Sheffield, it would form a much longer letter than I have any inclination to write. Let it suffice, that sir John means to pass in Sussex the interval of the two terms. Everything, in a word, goes on very pleasantly, except the terrestrial business of Lenborough. Last Saturday se'nnight I wrote to * * * *, to press him to see * * * *, and urge the arbitration. He has not *condescended* to answer me. All is a dead calm, sometimes more fatal than a storm. For God's sake send me advice. Adieu.

No. XXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

Boodle's, May 24th, 1774.

Do you remember that there exists in the world one Edward Gibbon, a housekeeper in Bentinck street? If the standard of writing and affection were the same, I am sure he would ill-deserve it. I do not wish to discover how many days (I am afraid I ought to use another word) have elapsed since the date of my last, or even of your last letter, and yet such is the sluggish nature of the beast, that I am afraid nothing but the arrival of Mrs Bonfoy, and the expectation of Mr Eliot, could have roused me from my lethargy. The lady gave me great satisfaction by her general account of your health and spirits, but communicated some uneasiness, by the mention of a little encounter, in the style of one of Don Quixote's, but which proved, I hope, as trifling as you at first imagined it. For my own part, I am well in mind and body, busy with my books, (which may perhaps produce something next year, either to tire or amuse the world,) and every day more satisfied with my present mode of life, which I always believed was calculated to make me happy. My only remaining uneasiness is Lenborough, which is not terminated. By Holroyd's advice, I rather try what may be obtained by a little more patience, than rush at once into the horrors of Chancery. But let us talk of something else. Mrs Porten grows younger every day. You remember, I think in Newman street, an agreeable woman, Miss W * * *. The under-secretary* is seriously in love with her, and seriously uneasy that his precarious situation precludes him from happiness. We shall soon see which will get the better, love or reason. I bet three to two on love.

* Sir Stanier Porten.

Guess my surprise, when Mrs Gibbon of Northamptonshire suddenly communicated her arrival. I immediately went to Surrey street, where she lodged, but though it was no more than half an hour after nine, the saint had finished her evening devotions, and was already retired to rest. Yesterday morning (by appointment) I breakfasted with her at eight o'clock, dined with her to-day at two in Newman street, and am just returned from setting her down. She is, in truth, a very great curiosity: her dress and figure exceed anything we had at the masquerade: her language and ideas belong to the last century. However, in point of religion, she was rational; that is to say, silent. I do not believe she asked a single question, or said the least thing concerning it. To me she behaved with great cordiality, and *in her way* expressed a great regard.

Mrs Porten tells me, that she has just written to you. She ought to go to a masquerade once a year. Did you think her such a girl?

I am dear, madam, most truly yours.

No. XXXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, May 24th, 1774.

I WROTE three folio pages to you this morning, and yet you complain. Have reason, and have mercy; consider all the excellent reasons for silence which I gave you in one of my last, and expect my arrival in Sussex, when I shall talk more in a quarter of an hour than I could write in a day. *Apropos* of that arrival; never pretend to allure me, by painting in odious colours the dust of London. I love the dust, and whenever I move into the Weald, it is to visit you and my lady, and not your trees. About this day month I mean to give you a *visitation*. I leave it to Guise, Clarke, and the other light-horse, to prance

down for a day or two. They all talk of mounting, but will not fix the day. Sir John Russell, whom I salute, has brought you, I suppose, all the news of Versailles. Let me only add, that the mesdames, by attending their father, have both got the small-pox. I can make nothing of * * *, or his lawyer. You will swear at the shortness of this letter.—Swear.

No. XXXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Saturday Evening, August 27th, 1774.

By your submission to the voice of reason, you eased me of a heavy load of anxiety. I did not like your enterprise. * * * * * As to papers, I will shew you that I can keep them safe till we meet. What think you of the Turks and Russians? Romanzow is a great man. He wrote an account of his amazing success to Mouskin Pouskin here, and declared his intention of retiring as soon as he had conducted the army home; desiring that Pouskin would send him the best plan he could procure of an English gentleman's farm. In his answer, Pouskin promised to get it; but added, that at the same time he should send the empress *a plan of Blenheim*. A handsome compliment, I think. My lady and Maria, as usual.

No. XXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bentinck street, Sept. 10th, 1774.

SINCE Heberden is returned, I think the road lies plain before you, I mean the turnpike road; the only plan which in good sense can be embraced is, without delay, to bring my lady to Bentinck street, where you may inhabit two or three nights, and have any advice (Turton, Heberden, &c.) which the town may

M 2

afford, in a case that most assuredly ought not to be trifled with. Do this as you value our good opinion. The Cantabs are strongly in the same sentiments. There can be no apprehension of late hours, &c. as none of Mrs Holroyd's raking acquaintance are in town. * * * * You give me no account of the works. When do you inhabit the library? *Turn over—great things await you.*

It is surely infinite condescension for a senator to bestow his attention on the affairs of a juryman. A senator? Yes, sir, at last.

——— *Quod Divum promittere nemo
Auderet, volenda dies, en attulit ultro.*———

Yesterday morning, about half an hour after seven, as I was destroying an army of barbarians, I heard a double rap at the door, and my friend Mr Eliot was soon introduced. After some idle conversation he told me that, if I was desirous of being in parliament, he had an *independent* seat very much at my service. * * * * This is a fine prospect opening upon me; and if next spring I should take my seat, and publish my book, it will be a very memorable era in my life. I am ignorant whether my borough will be Leskeard or St Germain's. You despise boroughs, and fly at nobler game. Adieu.

No. XXXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

December 2nd, 1774.

I SEND you inclosed a dismal letter from Hugonin. Return it without delay, with observations. A manifesto has been sent to * * *, which must, I think, produce immediate peace or war. Adieu. We shall have a warm day on the address next Monday. A number of young members! Whitshed, a *dry man*, assured me that he heard one of them ask, whether

the king always sat in that chair, pointing to the speaker's. Adieu.

No. XL.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Boodle's, Jan. 31st, 1775.

SOMETIMES people do not write because they are too idle, and sometimes because they are too busy. The former was usually my case, but at present it is the latter. The fate of Europe and America seems fully sufficient to take up the time of one man; and especially of a man who gives up a great deal of time for the purpose of public and private information. I think I have sucked Mauduit and Hutcheson very dry; and if my confidence was equal to my eloquence, and my eloquence to my knowledge, perhaps I might make no very intolerable speaker. At all events, I fancy I shall try to expose myself.

Semper ego auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam?

For my own part, I am more and more convinced that we have both the right and the power on our side, and that, though the effort may be accompanied with some melancholy circumstances, we are now arrived at the decisive moment of preserving or of losing for ever, both our trade and empire. We expect next Thursday or Friday to be a very great day. Hitherto we have been chiefly employed in reading papers, and rejecting petitions. Petitions were brought from London, Bristol, Norwich, &c., framed by party, and designed to delay. By the aid of some parliamentary quirks, they have been all referred to a separate inactive committee, which Burke calls a committee of oblivion, and are now considered as dead in law. I could write you fifty little House of Commons stories, but from their number and nature they suit better a conference than a letter. Our general divisions are about two hundred and fifty to eighty or ninety. Adieu.

No. XLI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Jan. 31st, 1775.

AN idle man has no time, and a busy man very little. As yet the House of Commons turns out very well to me, and though it should never prove of any real benefit to me, I find it at least a very agreeable coffee-house. We are plunging every day deeper and deeper into the great business of America; and I have hitherto been a zealous, though silent, friend to the cause of government, which, *in this instance*, I think the cause of England. I passed about ten days, as I designed, at Uppark. I found lord * * * and four-score fox-hounds.

The troubles of Beriton are perfectly composed, and the insurgents reduced to a state, though not a temper, of submission. You may suppose I heard a great deal of Petersfield. Luttrell means to convict your friend of bribery, to transport him for using a second time old stamps, and to prove that Petersfield is still a part of the manor of Beriton. I remain an impartial spectator. I am, dear madam, most truly yours.

No XLII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

February 8th, 1775.

I AM not ———, according to your charitable wishes, because I have not acted; there was such an inundation of speakers, young speakers in every sense of the word, both on Thursday in the grand committee, and Monday on the report to the House, that neither lord George Germaine nor myself could find room for a single word. The principal men both days were Fox and Wedderburne, on the opposite sides; the latter displayed his usual talents; the former,

taking the vast compass of the question before us, discovered powers for regular debate, which neither his friends hoped nor his enemies dreaded. We voted an address, (three hundred and four to one hundred and five,) of lives and fortunes, declaring Massachussets Bay in a state of rebellion. More troops, but I fear not enough, go to America, to make an army of ten thousand men at Boston; three generals, Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton. In a few days we stop the ports of New England. I cannot write volumes; but I am more and more convinced, that with firmness all may go well; yet I sometimes doubt. I am now writing with ladies, (sir S. Porten and his bride,) and two card-tables, in the library. As to my silence, judge of my situation by last Monday. I am on the Grenvillian committee of Downton. We always sit from ten to three and a half; after which, that day, I went into the House, and sat till three in the morning. Adieu.

No. XLIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Feb. 25th, 1775.

We go on with regard to America, if we can be said to go on; for on last Monday a conciliatory motion of allowing the colonies to tax themselves was introduced by lord North, in the midst of lives and fortunes, war and famine. We went into the House in confusion, every moment expecting that the Bedfords would fly into rebellion against those measures. Lord North rose six times to appease the storm, but all in vain; till at length sir Gilbert declared for administration, and the troops all rallied under their proper standard. On Wednesday we had the Middlesex election. I was a patriot; sat by the lord mayor, who spoke well, and with temper, but before the end of the debate fell fast asleep. I am still a mute; if

is more tremendous than I imagined; the great speakers fill me with despair, the bad ones with terror.

When do you move? My lady answered like a woman of sense, spirit, and good nature. Neither she nor I could bear it. She was right, and the duchess of Braganza would have made the same answer. Adieu.

No. XLIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON.

DEAR MADAM,

March 30th, 1775.

I HARDLY know how to take up the pen. I talked in my last of two or three posts, and I am almost ashamed to calculate how many have elapsed. I will endeavour for the future to be less scandalous. Only believe that my heart is innocent of the laziness of my hand. I do not mean to have recourse to the stale and absurd excuse of business, though I have really had a very considerable hurry of new parliamentary business: one day, for instance, of seventeen hours, from ten in the morning till between three and four the next morning. It is, upon the whole, an agreeable improvement in my life, and forms just the mixture of business, of study, and of society, which I always imagined I should, and now find I do like. Whether the House of Commons may ever prove of benefit to myself or country, is another question. As yet I have been mute. In the course of our American affairs, I have sometimes had a wish to speak, but though I felt tolerably prepared as to the matter, I dreaded exposing myself in the manner, and remained in my seat safe, but inglorious. Upon the whole, (though I still believe I shall try,) I doubt whether Nature, not that in some instances I am ungrateful, has given me the talents of an orator, and I feel that I came into parliament much too late to exert them. Do you hear of Port Elliot coming to

Bath? And, above all, do you hear of Charles street* coming to Bentinck street, it its way to Essex. Adieu.

Dear madam, I am most truly yours.

No. XLV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

DEAR MADAM,

House of Commons,
May 2nd, 1775.

I ACCEPT of the Pomeranian lady with gratitude and pleasure, and shall be impatient to form an acquaintance with her. My presentations at St James's passed graciously. My dinner at Twickenham was attended with less ceremony and more amusement. If they turned out lord North tomorrow, they would still leave him one of the best companions in the kingdom. By this time, I suppose, the Eliots are with you. I am sure you will say everything kind and proper on the occasion. I am glad to hear of the approbation of my constituents for my vote on the Middlesex election. On the subject of America, I have been something more of a courtier. You know, I suppose, that Holroyd is just stepped over to Ireland for a fortnight. He passed three days with me on his way. Deyverdun had left me just before your letter arrived, which I shall soon have an opportunity of conveying to him. Though, I flatter myself, he broke from me with some degree of uneasiness, the engagement could not be declined. At the end of four years he has an annuity of one hundred pounds for life, and may for the remainder of his days enjoy a decent independence in that country, which a philosopher would perhaps prefer to the rest of Europe. For my own part, after the hurry of the town and of parliament, I am now retired to my villa in Bentinck street, which I begin to find a very pleasing solitude, at least as well as if it were two hundred miles from

* Mrs Gibbon's residence at Bath.

London; because, when I am tired of the Roman Empire, I can laugh away the evening at Foote's theatre, which I could not do in Hampshire or Cornwall. I am, dear madam, most truly yours.

No. XLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck street, August 1st, 1775.

YOUR apprehensions of a precipitate work, &c. are perfectly groundless. I should be much more addicted to a contrary extreme. The *head* is now printing: true, but it was written last year and the year before. The first chapter has been composed *de nouveau three times*; the second *twice*, and all the others has undergone reviews, corrections, &c. As to the tail, it is perfectly formed and digested, and (were I so much given to self-content and haste) it is almost all written. The ecclesiastical part, for instance, is written out in fourteen sheets, which I mean to *refondre* from beginning to end. As to the friendly critic, it is very difficult to find one who has leisure, candour, freedom and knowledge sufficient. However, Batt and Deyverdun have read and observed. After all, the public is the best critic. I print no more than five hundred copies of the first edition; and the second (as it happens frequently to my betters) may receive many improvements. So much for Rome. We have nothing new from America. But I can venture to assure you, that administration is now as unanimous and decided as the occasion requires. Something will be done this year; but in the spring the force of the country will be exerted to the utmost. Scotch Highlanders, Irish Papists, Hanoverians, Canadians, Indians, &c. will all in various shapes be employed. Parliament meets the first week in November. I think his Catholic majesty may be satisfied with his summer's amusement. The Spaniards fought with great bravery,

and made a fine retreat; but our Algerine friends surpassed them as much in conduct as in number Adieu.

The duchess has stopped Foote's piece. She sent for him to Kingston house, and threatened, bribed, argued, and wept for about two hours. He assured her, that if the chamberlain was obstinate, he should publish it, with a dedication to her grace.

XLVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

London, August 1775.

Will you accept my present literary business as an excuse for my not writing? I think you will be in the wrong if you do, since I was just as idle before. At all events however it is better to say three words than to be totally a dumb dog. *Apropos* of dog, but not of dumb: your Pomeranian is the comfort of my life; pretty, impertinent, fantastical, all that a young lady of fashion ought to be. I flatter myself that our passion is reciprocal. I am just at present engaged in a great historical work; no less than a History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; with the first volume of which I may very possibly oppress the public next winter. It would require some pages to give a more particular idea of it; but I shall only say in general, that the subject is curious, and never yet treated as it deserves; and that during some years it has been in my thoughts, and even under my pen. Should the attempt fail, it must be by the fault of the execution. Adieu. Dear madam, believe me most truly yours.

No. XLVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ

Bentinck street, Oct. 14th, 1775.

I SEND you two pieces of intelligence from the best authority, and which, unless you hear them from some other quarter, I do not wish you should talk much about. 1. When the Russians arrive (if they refresh themselves in England or Ireland) will you go and see their camp? We have great hopes of getting a body of these barbarians. In consequence of some very plain advances, king George, with his own hand, wrote a very polite epistle to sister Kitty, requesting her friendly assistance. Full powers and instructions were sent at the same time to Gunning, to agree for any force between five-and-twenty thousand men, *carte blanche* for the terms; on condition however that they should serve, not as auxiliaries, but as mercenaries, and that the Russian general should be absolutely under the command of the British. They daily and hourly expect a messenger, and hope to hear that the business is concluded. The worst of it is, that the Baltic will soon be frozen up, and that it must be late next year before they can get to America.

2. In the meantime we are not quite easy about Canada; and even if it should be safe from an attack, we cannot flatter ourselves with the expectation of bringing down that martial people on the back settlements. The priests are ours; the gentlemen very prudently wait the event, and are disposed to join the party; but the same lawless spirit and im-government which have infected our gone forth among the Canadian peasants, since the conquest, the noblesse have lost their ancient influence. Another thing of ease and surprise, is the assurance which comes from a man who might tell me a lie, but who is not to be mistaken, that no arts, no manage-

ment whatsoever, have been used to procure the addresses which fill the Gazette, and that lord North was as much surprised at the first that came up, as we could be at Sheffield. We shall have, I suppose, some brisk skirmishing in parliament, but the business will soon be decided by our superior weight of fire. *Appropos*, I believe there has been some vague but serious conversation about *calling out the militia*. The new levies go on very slowly in Ireland. The Dissenters, both there and here, are violent and active. Adieu. I embrace my lady and Maria.

No. XLIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

London, January 18th, 1776.

How do you do? Are you alive? Are you buried under mountains of snow? I write merely to triumph in the superiority of my own situation, and to rejoice in my own prudence, in not going down to Sheffield place, as I seriously, but foolishly, intended to do last week. We proceed triumphantly with the Roman Empire, and shall certainly make our appearance before the end of next month. I have nothing public. You know we have got eighteen thousand Germans from Hesse, Brunswick, and Hesse-Darmstadt. I think our meeting will be lively; a spirited minority, and a desponding majority. The higher people are placed, the more gloomy are their countenances, the more melancholy their language. You may call this cowardice, but I fear it arises from their knowledge (a late knowledge) of the difficulty and magnitude of the business. Quebec is not *yet* taken. I hear that Carleton is determined never to capitulate with rebels. A glorious resolution, if it were supported with fifty thousand men! Adieu. I embrace my lady and Maria. Make my excuses to the latter, for having neglected her birth-day.

No. L.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

January 29th, 1776.

HARES, &c. arrived safe ; were received with thanks, and devoured with appetite. Send more (*id est*) of hares. I believe, in my last, I forgot saying anything of the son of Fergus ; his letters reached him. What think you of the season ? Siberia, is it not ? A pleasant campaign in America. I read and pondered your last, and think that, in the place of lord George Germaine, you might perhaps succeed ; but I much fear that our leaders have not a genius which can act at the distance of three thousand miles. You know, that a large draught of guards are just going to America ; poor dear creatures ! We are met ; but no business. Next week may be busy ; Scotch militia, &c. Roman Empire (first part) will be finished in a week or a fortnight. At last, I have heard Texier ; wonderful ! Embrace my lady. The weather too cold to turn over the page. Adieu.

Since this, I received your last, and honour your care of the old women : a respectable name, which, in spite of my lady, may suit judges, bishops, generals, &c. I am rejoiced to hear of Maria's inoculation. I know not when you have done so wise a thing. You may depend upon getting an excellent house. Adieu.

LI.

MR WHITAKER TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Saturday, Feb. 24th, 1776.

I HAVE just now received the favour of your History, and I would not delay the acknowledgment. I expect equal information and entertainment from it. In that expectation I shall sit down to it next week ; and, when I have gone over the whole, you shall

hear from me again, without flattery, though not perhaps without partiality. In the meantime, if I thought I might trouble you so soon after my late tax upon you, I would send you a dozen of covers, and beg you to take the trouble of addressing them to Miss Holme, of Brownhill, Rochdale, Lancashire. She is not a mere goddess in Platonic vision. And, if you knew what an elegant, sensible, and spirited correspondence betwixt her and a Welsh lady you would promote by the flourish of your pen, you would run it over a few half sheets with pleasure. But I think I have no right to ask for the one, and shall therefore decline sending the others.

Your History found me engaged in another history, a work long designed by me, but now executing on a new plan, and therefore with a new title. It is to be called *The Military History of the Romans in Britain*, and will consequently take in all their military transactions here, and endeavour to place them in new points of view. I have already finished two chapters upon this model, and have gone through the two expeditions of Cæsar in them. But I find one inconvenience attending my departure from the common line of relation with regard to these invasions, which I do not like, and yet know not how to avoid. I am obliged to defend my own accounts in some formal dissertations at the end. And, if I go on as I have begun, my appendix will be half as large as my history.

I hope your anti-American spirits, sir, are in a higher flow than they were when I had last the pleasure of hearing from you. Manchester has taken a decided part against the Americans. And, having beaten the petitioners out of the field in action, we are now attacking them in the London papers, and driving them from their last refuge there.

I remain, dear sir,

Your most devoted and very humble

Friend and servant.

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J. WHITAKER.

No. LII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

SIR,

No. 29 Fetter lane, March 26th.

It was not till yesterday, that I knew to whom I was indebted for your obliging communication of last week. It was, before, a sort of fairy favour. And I supposed, with regret, that it was in vain to inquire after the invisible hand which had reached it out to me. But yesterday, casting a casual look upon the outer cover, I there saw what I had not observed before, a note from Mr White, the bookseller. This naturally led me to inquire of him. And from him I had the satisfaction to learn, that my unknown and friendly correspondent was Mr Gibbon. To Mr Gibbon therefore I return my cordial thanks for the obliging manner in which he speaks of the History of Manchester, and my more cordial for his two remarks upon it. These have pointed out a tract of thinking, with which I was but little acquainted before. And I should be glad to enter upon it in company with such a guide, and pursue it to its termination. Cannot Mr Gibbon and I therefore contrive to spend an hour together upon the subject? I shall be very happy in waiting upon Mr Gibbon at his own appointment, and either in Bentinck street, Fetter lane, or a coffee-house. And I shall be glad to cultivate the acquaintance of a gentleman, who seems to be, what few even of our professed scholars are, very conversant with the earlier history of our country.

In the meantime I have the pleasure to subscribe myself Mr Gibbon's obliged

And most devoted humble servant,

J. WHITAKER.

No. LIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

Manchester, April 21, 1776.

I HAVE just finished your History : and I sit down to thank you for it a second time. You have laid open the interior principles of the Roman constitution with great learning, and shewn their operation on the general body of the empire with great judgment. Your work therefore will do you high honour. You never speak feebly, except when you come upon British ground,—and never weakly, except when you attack Christianity. In the former case, you seem to me to want information ; and, in the latter, you plainly want the common candour of a citizen of the world for the religious system of your country. Pardon me, sir, but, much as I admire your abilities, greatly as I respect your friendship, I cannot bear without indignation your sarcastic slyness upon Christianity, and cannot see without pity your determined hostility to the Gospel. But I leave the subject to beg a favour of you. After so open a declaration, I pay a great compliment to the friendliness of your spirit, to solicit from you any favour.

I have inclosed you a printed paper, written by myself, and relating to a bill for this town, which is now in the House. It was drawn up with the utmost plainness, in order to be level to the comprehensions of the persons to whom it was addressed. And I take the liberty of sending it to you, to inform you of the nature and complexion of the bill. You may depend upon all the facts in it. And if you think the arguments convincing in themselves, and the cause for my sake worthy of your interposition, you will perhaps think it requisite, either by application to the committee or by an overture to the House, to get a couple of restraining paragraphs inserted in the

bill, that shall make every subscriber to the improvements a commissioner under the act, and oblige the commissioners to finish all the improvements in a limited time. In doing this, you will check a spirit of tyranny, that has shewn itself very powerfully in this region of mercantile equality, and confine it within proper bounds. And you will particularly oblige your friend, who, with a great promptness to submit to the authority of his legal superiors, feels a greater reluctance to truckle to the assumed dominion of his equals.

I write to sir Thomas Egerton by this post, and upon this occasion. But, as his friends here are divided upon the matter, I am doubtful whether he will choose to interpose in it. I shall write also to one or two other friends of mine in the House. But as I have not the same claim of friendship upon them which you allow me to have upon you, I rely principally upon your interposition. And if you can serve the thinking part of this town, if you can oblige me, you will (I am convinced) do both.

Let me add to this favour, which is merely a public and political one, another of a more private and tender nature. Will you make some of your servants fold me up a dozen covers, and inscribe them yourself to Miss Holme, Brownhill, Rochdale, Lancashire? If you will, you will heighten the former favour, and make me still more

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. WHITAKER.

No. LIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Manchester, May 11th, 1776.

ou for your franks. And I thank you
your friendly return to my last. You
application to you about the business in

parliament with your usual kindness. I wrote to others of my friends in the House at the same time. And I carried the great point at which I aimed. You also received my animadversions upon your History with candour. I was particularly pointed, I believe, in what I said concerning the religious part of it. I wrote from my feelings at the time; and was perhaps the less inclined to suppress those feelings from friendliness, because I had two favours to beg of you. I hope I shall ever be attached, with every power of my judgment and my affection, to that glorious system of truth, which is the vital principle of happiness to my soul in time and in eternity. And in this I act not from any "restraints of profession." I should despise myself, if I did. I act from the fullest conviction of a mind, that has been a good deal exercised in inquiries into truth, and that has shewn (I fancy) a strong spirit of rational scepticism in rejecting and refuting a variety of opinions, which have passed current for ages in our national history.

With regard to what I said concerning your British accounts, I meant not to blame you, either for not saying all that you knew concerning our island, or for not bringing in the intimations of Richard on Ossian. I blamed you only for not noticing some particulars, that made a necessary part of your narration, and are mentioned by the best authorities. And I remember particularly, that in your description of the Empire about the time of Severus, and in your short intimations concerning the state of the towns within it, you specify only London and York as remarkable towns in Britain, though Tacitus and Dio give us such an account of Camulodunum, and though Chester appears from an inscription and a coin to have been then a colony. And in the description of those two which you mention you take no notice, I think, of the sweet and pleasant situation of London, so strikingly marked by Tacitus, and of the Temple of Bel-lona, and of the Palatium or Domus Palatina, in

York, so expressly specified by Spartian. You omit also the fine baths of Britain, so plainly pointed out in the *Thermæ* of Ptolemy, and the *Aquæ Solis* of Antoninus's Itinerary, and so celebrated by Solinus. You equally omit the latter's Temple of Apollo and Minerva, at the same colony of Bath. And you also omit the colony of Gloucester, though demonstrated to be one by an inscription; and the colony of *Caer Gwent*, in Monmouthshire, though particularized by Antoninus's Itinerary, and exhibiting such remains in Giraldus Cambrensis.* These were some of the remarks that forced themselves upon my mind as I read your work. Others also arose of a different nature and inferior importance, as that the native language of Gaul and Britain was driven by the Romans to the hills and mountains; that the Druids borrowed money upon bonds payable in the other world, &c. The former is undoubtedly a mistake in the island, and, I believe, is equally so on the continent. And the latter, I apprehend, has only the frivolous authority of Cluverius or some such writer for its ground-work. From these and other particulars it was that I received the impression which I ventured to declare in my last. And I am ready to acknowledge my mistake, if I am wrong.

These however, if never so true, are but trifles light as air in my estimation, when they are compared with what I think the great blot of your work. You have there exhibited Deism in a new shape, and in one that is more likely to affect the uninstructed million, than the reasoning form which she has usually worn. You seem to me like another Tacitus, revived with all his animosity against Christianity,

* Mr Whitaker's eagerness to display his erudition as a British Antiquarian, seems to have occasioned a forgetfulness that Mr Gibbon did not affect that character; that, as historian of Rome, his subject could not be supposed to trace the details of British antiquities. S.

his strong philosophical spirit of sentiment, and more than his superiority to the absurdities of heathenism. And you will have the dishonour (pardon me, sir) of being ranked by the folly of scepticism, that is working so powerfully at present, among the most distinguished deists of the age. I have long suspected the tendency of your opinions. I once took the liberty of hinting my suspicions. But I did not think the poison had spread so universally through your frame. And I can only deplore the misfortune, and a very great one I consider it, to the highest and dearest interests of man among all your readers.

These must be very numerous. I see you are getting a second edition already. I give you joy of it. And I remain, with an equal mixture of regret and regard,

Your obliged friend and servant,

J. WHITAKER.

No. LV.

REV. DR JOSEPH WARTON TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

Winchester, March 11th, 1776.

I CANNOT forbear expressing my thanks to you, for the very great pleasure and instruction I have met with in your excellent work. I protest to you I know of no history in our language written with equal purity, precision, and elegance of style. I presume you have heard that offence is taken at some passages that are thought unfavourable to the truth of Christianity. I hope you will proceed to finish your plan, and gratify the eager wishes of the public to see the whole of your work. May I ever hope for the honour of seeing you at this place? It would give me the most real pleasure.

I am, dear sir,

With the truest regard, your much obliged,
and very faithful humble servant,

JOS. WARTON.

No. LVI.

DAVID GARRICK, ESQ. TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

Adelphi, March 9th, 1776.

WHENEVER I am truly pleased I must communicate my joy : lord Camden called upon me this morning, and, before Cumberland, declared that he never read a more admirable performance than Mr Gibbon's History, &c. *He was in transport, and so was I—the author is the only man to write history of the age—such depth—such perspicuity—such language, force, variety, and what not !*

I am so delighted with him, continues he, that I must write to thank him—I should be happy to know him. My lord, I have that honour, and will contrive, if possible, to bring you together. Said I too much? My coach is at the door—my wife bawling for me, and everything impatient—so hey for Hampton till Monday, and in the meantime, as I am always, most truly,

Your most obedient and obliged,

D. GARRICK.

I have not a moment to read over this scrawl.

No. LVII.

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE TO EDWARD GIBBON,
ESQ.

MR WALPOLE cannot express how much he is obliged to Mr Gibbon for the valuable present he has received ; nor how great a comfort it is to him, in his present situation, in which he little expected to receive so singular a pleasure. Mr Walpole does not say this at random, nor from mere confidence in the author's abilities, for he has already (all his weakness would permit) read the first chapter, and is in the greatest admiration of the style, manner, method,

clearness, and intelligence. Mr Walpole's impatience to proceed will struggle with his disorder, and give him such spirits, that he flatters himself he shall owe part of his recovery to Mr Gibbon, whom, as soon as that is a little effected, he shall beg the honour of seeing.

No. LVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

February 14th, 1776.

AFTER the singular pleasure of reading you, sir, the next satisfaction is to declare my admiration. I have read great part of your volume, and cannot decide to which of its various merits I give the preference, though I have no doubt of assigning my partiality to one virtue of the author, which, seldom as I meet with it, always strikes me superiorly. Its quality will naturally prevent your guessing which I mean. It is your amiable modesty. How can you know so much, judge so well, possess your subject and your knowledge, and your power of judicious reflection so thoroughly, and yet command yourself and betray no dictatorial arrogance of decision? How unlike very ancient and very modern authors! You have unexpectedly given the world a classic history. The fame it must acquire will tend every day to acquit this panegyric of flattery. The impressions it has made on me are very numerous. The strongest is the thirst of being better acquainted with you—but I reflect that I have been a trifling author, and am in no light profound enough to deserve your intimacy, except by confessing your superiority so frankly, that I assure you honestly I already feel no envy, though I did for a moment. The best proof I can give you of my sincerity, is to exhort you, warmly and earnestly, to go on with your noble work—the strongest, though a presumptuous, mark of my

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friendship, is to warn you never to let your charming modesty be corrupted by the "acclamations your talents will receive. The native qualities of the man should never be sacrificed to those of the author, however shining. I take this liberty as an older man, which reminds me how little I dare promise myself that I shall see your work completed! But I love posterity enough to contribute, if I can, to give them pleasure through you.

I am too weak to say more, though I could talk for hours on your History. But one feeling I cannot suppress, though it is a sensation of vanity. I think, nay, I am sure I perceive that your sentiments on government agree with my own. It is the only point on which I suspect myself of any partiality in my admiration. It is a reflection of a far inferior vanity that pleases me in your speaking with so much distinction of that, alas! wonderful period, in which the world saw five good monarchs succeed each other. I have often thought of treating that Elysian era. Happily it has fallen into better hands!

I have been able to rise to-day, for the first time, and flatter myself that if I have no relapse you will in two or three days more give me leave, sir, to ask the honour of seeing you. In the meantime, be just; and do not suspect me of flattering you. You will always hear that I say the same of you to everybody.

I am, with the greatest regard, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

HOB. WALPOLE.

No. LIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

VE gone through your inquisitor's attack, and from being clear that it deserves your giving the trouble of an answer, as neither the

detail nor the result affects your argument. So far from it, many of his reproofs are levelled at your having quoted a wrong page, he confessing often that what you have cited is in the author referred to, but not precisely in the individual spot. If St Peter is attended by a corrector of the press, you will certainly never be admitted where he is porter. I send you my copy, because I scribbled my remarks. I do not send them with the impertinent presumption of suggesting a hint to you, but to prove I did not grudge the trouble of going through such a book, when you desired it; and to shew how little struck me as of any weight.

I have set down nothing on your imputed plagiarisms; for if they are so, no argument that has ever been employed, must be used again, even where the passage necessary is applied to a different purpose. An author is not allowed to be master of his own works; but, by Davis's new law, the first person that cites him would be so. You probably looked into Middleton. Dodwell, &c., had the same reflections on the same circumstances, or conceived them, so as to recollect them, without remembering what suggested them. Is this plagiarism? If it is, Davis and such cavillers might go a short step farther, and insist that an author should peruse every work antecedently written, on every subject at all collateral to his own, —not to assist him, but to be sure to avoid every material touched by his predecessors.

I will make but one remark on such divine champions. Davis and his prototypes tell you Middleton, &c., have used the same objections, and they have been *confuted*; *answering*, in the Theologic Dictionary, signifying *confuting*, no matter whether there is sense, argument, truth, in the answer or not.

Upon the whole, I think ridicule is the only answer such a work is entitled to. The ablest answer which you can make (which would be the ablest answer that could be made) would never have any authority with

the cabal, yet would allow a sort of dignity to the author. His patrons will always maintain that he vanquished you, unless you make him too ridiculous for them to dare to revive his name. You might divert yourself too with alma mater, the church, employing a *goujat* to defend the citadel, while the generals repose in their tents. If Irenæus, St Augustin &c., did not set apprentices and proselytes to combat Celsus and the adversaries of the new religion—but early bishops had not five or six thousand pounds a-year.

In short, dear sir, I wish you not to lose your time; that is, either not reply or set *your mark* on your answer, that it may always be read with the rest of your works.

No. LX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE penetration, solidity, and taste, that made you the first of historians, dear sir, prevent my being surprised at your being the best writer of controversial pamphlets too. I have read you with more precipitation than such a work deserved, but I could not disobey you and detain it. Yet even in that hurry I could discern, besides a thousand beauties and strokes of wit, the inimitable eighty-third page, and the conscious dignity that you maintain throughout, over your monkish antagonists. When you are so superior in argument, it would look like insensibility to the power of your reasoning, to select transcendent passages for commendation; and yet I must mention one that pleased me particularly, from the delicacy of the severity, and from its novelty too; it is, *bold is not the word*. This is the feathered arrow of Cupid that is more formidable than the club of Hercules. I need not specify thanks, when I prove how much I have been pleased.

Your most obliged,

H. WALPOLE.

No. LXI.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DR ROBERTSON TO
MR STRAHAN, DATED EDINBURGH COLLEGE,
MARCH 15, 1776.

* * * * SINCE my last I have read Mr Gibbon's history with much attention, and great pleasure. It is a work of very high merit indeed. He possesses that industry of research, without which no man deserves the name of an historian. His narrative is perspicuous and interesting; his style is elegant and forcible, though in some passages I think rather too laboured, and in others too quaint. But these defects are amply compensated by the beauty of the general flow of language, and a very peculiar happiness in many of his expressions. I have traced him in many of his quotations, (for experience has taught me to suspect the accuracy of my brother penmen,) and I find he refers to no passage but what he has seen with his own eyes. I hope the book will be as successful as it deserves to be. I have not yet read the two last chapters, but am sorry from what I have heard of them, that he has taken such a tone in them as will give great offence, and hurt the sale of the book.

No. LXII.

ADAM FERGUSON, ESQ. TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

Edinburgh, March 19, 1776.

I RECEIVED, about eight days ago, after I had been reading your history, the copy which you have been so good as to send me, and for which I now trouble you with my thanks. But even if I had not been thus called upon to offer you my respects, I could not have refrained from congratulating you on the merit, and undoubted success, of this valuable performance. The persons of this place whose judgment you will value

most, agree in opinion, that you have made a great addition to the classical literature of England, and given us, what Thucydides proposed leaving with his own countrymen, a *possession in perpetuity*. Men of a certain modesty and merit always exceed the expectations of their friends; and it is with very great pleasure I tell you, that although you must have observed in me every mark of consideration and regard, that this is nevertheless the case, I receive your instruction and study your model with great deference, and join with every one else in applauding the extent of your plan, in hands so well able to execute it. Some of your readers, I find, were impatient to get at the fifteenth chapter, and began at that place. I have not heard much of their criticism, but am told that many doubt of your orthodoxy. I wish to be always of the charitable side, while I own you have proved that the clearest stream may become foul when it comes to run over the muddy bottom of human nature. I have not stayed to make any particular remarks. If any should occur on the second reading, I shall not fail to lay in my claim to a more needed, and more useful admonition from you, in case I ever produce anything that merits your attention.

And am, with the greatest respect, dear sir,

Your most obliged, and most humble servant,

ADAM FERGUSON.

No. LXIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR DAVID HUME TO
MR STRAHAN.

Edinburgh, April 8th, 1776.

* * * * I AM very much taken with Mr Gibbon's Roman History, which came from your press, and am glad to hear of its success. There will no books of reputation now be printed in London but through your hands and Mr Cadell's. The author tells

me, that he is already preparing a second edition. I resolved to have given him my advice with regard to the manner of printing it; but as I am now writing to you, it is the same thing. He ought certainly to print the number of the chapter at the head of the margin; and it would be better if something of the contents could also be added. One is also plagued with his notes, according to the present method of printing the book: when a note is announced, you turn to the end of the volume; and there you often find nothing but a reference to an authority. All these authorities ought only to be printed at the margin, or the bottom of the page. I desire a copy of my new edition should be sent to Mr Gibbon; as wishing that gentleman, whom I so highly value, should peruse me in a form the least imperfect to which I can bring my work.

* * * * * Dr Smith's performance is another excellent work that has come from your press this winter; but I have ventured to tell him that it requires too much thought to be as popular as Mr Gibbon's.

No. LXIV.

MR FERGUSON TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

Edinburgh, April 18th, 1776.

I SHOULD make some apology for not writing you sooner an answer to your obliging letter; but if you should honour me frequently with such requests, you will find that, with very good intentions, I am a very dilatory and irregular correspondent. I am sorry to tell you, that our respectable friend* is still declining in his health; he is greatly emaciated, and loses strength. He talks familiarly of his near prospect of dying. His mother, it seems, died under the same symptoms; and it appears so little necessary or proper

* Mr Hume.

to flatter him, that no one attempts it. I never observed his understanding more clear, or his humour more pleasant and lively. He has a great aversion to leave the tranquillity of his own house, to go in search of health among inns and hostlers. And his friends here gave way to him for some time; but now think it necessary that he should make an effort to try what change of place and air, or anything else sir John Pringle may advise, can do for him. I left him this morning in the mind to comply in this article, and I hope that he will be prevailed on to set out in a few days. He is just now sixty-five.

I am very glad that the pleasure you give us recoils a little on yourself, through our feeble testimony. I have, as you suppose, been employed, at any intervals of leisure or rest I have had for some years, in taking notes, or collecting materials, for a history of the distractions that broke down the Roman republic, and ended in the establishment of Augustus and his immediate successors. The compliment you are pleased to pay, I cannot accept of, even to my subject. Your subject now appears with advantages it was not supposed to have had; and I suspect that the magnificence of the mouldering ruin will appear more striking than the same building when the view is perplexed with scaffolding, workmen, and disorderly lodgers, and the ear is stunned with the noise of destructions and repairs, and the alarms of fire. The night which you begin to describe is solemn, and there are gleams of light superior to what is to be found in any other time. I comfort myself, that as my trade is the study of human nature, I could not fix on a more interesting corner of it, than the end of the Roman republic. Whether my compilations should ever deserve the attention of any one beside myself, must remain to be determined after they are farther advanced. I take the liberty to trouble you with the inclosed for Mr Smith, whose uncertain stay in London makes me at

a loss how to direct for him. You have both such reason to be pleased with the world just now, that I hope you are pleased with each other.

I am, with the greatest respect,

Dear sir,

Your most obedient, and most humble servant,

ADAM FERGUSON.

No. LXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

London, May 20th, 1776.

I AM angry that you should impede my noble designs of visiting foreign parts, more especially as I have an advantage which sir Wilful had not, that of understanding your foreign lingos. With regard to Mrs Gibbon, her intended visit, to which I was not totally a stranger, will do me honour; and, though it should delay my emigration till the end of July, there will still remain the months of August, September, and October. Above all, abstain from giving the least hint to any Bath correspondent, and perhaps, if I am not provoked by opposition, the thing may not be absolutely certain. At all events you may depend on a previous visit. At present, I am very busy with the Neckers. I live with her just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple reasonable Suisse. The man who might read English husbands lessons of proper and dutiful behaviour, is a sensible good-natured creature. In about a fortnight I launch again into the world in the shape of a quarto volume. Cadell assures me that he never remembered so eager and impatient a demand for a second edition. The town is beginning to break up: the day after tomorrow we have our last day in the House of Commons, to inquire into the instructions of the commissioners. I like the plan, and the motion app

plain. Adieu. I dined with lord Palmerstone to-day; great dinner of catches. I embrace my lady and the Maria.

No. LXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

To tell you anything of the change, or rather changes, of governors, I must have known something of them myself; but all is darkness, confusion, and uncertainty, to such a degree, that people do not even know what lies to invent. The news from America have indeed diverted the public attention into another, and far greater, channel. All that you see in the papers, of the repulse at Quebec, as well as the capture of Lee, rests on the authority (a very unexceptionable one) of the provincial papers, as they have been transmitted by governor Tryon from New York. Howe is well, and eats plentifully; and the weather seems to clear up so fast, that, according to the English custom, we have passed from the lowest despondency to a full assurance of success. My new birth happened last Monday; seven hundred of the fifteen hundred were gone yesterday. I now understand, from pretty good authority, that Dr Porteus, the friend and chaplain of Secker, is actually sharpening his goose quill against the two last chapters. Adieu.

June the 6th, 1776, from Almack's,
where I was chosen last week.

LXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Almack's, June 24th, 1776.

Yes, yes, I am alive and well; but what shall I say? Town grows empty, and this house, where I have passed very agreeable hours, is the only place which still unites the flower of the English youth. The

style of living, though *somewhat* expensive, is exceedingly pleasant, and, notwithstanding the rage of play, I have found more entertaining, and even rational society here, than in any other club to which I belong. Mrs Gibbon still hangs in suspense, and seems to consider a town-expedition with horror. I think however that she will be soon in motion; and when I have her in Bentinck street, we shall perhaps talk of a Sheffield excursion. I am now deeply engaged in the reign of Constantine, and, from the specimens which I have already seen, I can venture to promise, that the second volume will not be less interesting than the first. The fifteen hundred copies are moving off with decent speed, and the obliging Cadell begins to mutter something of a third edition for next year.* No news of Deyverdun, or his French translation. What a lazy dog! Madame Necker has

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been gone a great while. I gave her, *en partant*, the most solemn assurances of following her *paws* in less than two months; but the voice of indolence begins to whisper a thousand difficulties, and unless your absurd policy should thoroughly provoke me, the Parisian journey may possibly be deferred. I rejoice in the progress of * * * * towards light. We are in expectation of American news. Carleton is made a knight of the Bath. The old report of Washington's resignation and quarrel with the congress seems to revive. Adieu.

No. LXVIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DR GEORGE CAMPBELL,
PROFESSOR AT ABERDEEN, TO MR STRAHAN, DATED
ABERDEEN, JUNE 25TH, 1776.

I HAVE lately read over one of your last winter's publications with very great pleasure, and I hope some instruction. My expectations were indeed high when I began it; but, I assure you, the entertainment I received greatly exceeded them. What made me fall to it with greater avidity was, that it had in part a pretty close connection with a subject I had occasion to treat sometimes in my theological lectures; to wit, the Rise and Progress of the Hierarchy: and you will believe that I was not the less pleased to discover, in an historian of so much learning and penetration, so great a coincidence with my own sentiments, in relation to some obscure points in the Christian antiquities. I suppose I need not now inform you, that the book I mean is Gibbon's History of the Fall of the Roman Empire; which, in respect of the style and manner, as well as the matter, is a most masterly performance.

No. LXIX.

MADAME NECKER A MONSIEUR GIBBON.

Paris, 29 Juillet.

JE me reprocherois vivement, monsieur, d'avoir laissé si long temps sans réponse la plus touchante et la plus aimable des lettres, si je l'avois fait par paresse ou par négligence ; mais j'ai malheureusement une trop bonne excuse, M. Necker a été long tems malade non du regret d'avoir donné sa démission, mais du chagrin d'avoir été obligé de la donner ; car il est pour les honnêtes gens une nécessité morale plus invincible que la nécessité physique : les inquiétudes, que la santé de monsieur Necker m'a fait éprouver, m'ont appris plus que jamais à compter pour rien les peines qui n'affectent pas la sensibilité : quand monsieur Necker se chargea d'une grande place, je crus le prêter à l'honneur, et non aux honneurs, et quand on a voulu lui conserver les uns au dépens de l'autre, j'ai repris avec transport le bien dont je m'étois privée, et j'ai l'ame trop tendre pour craindre de ne pouvoir pas seule suffire au bonheur d'une personne qui m'est chère : la retraite de monsieur Necker a été accompagné des regrets et de l'étonnement de toute la France, et nous même en descendant au fond de nos cœurs nous ne pouvons encore comprendre qu'on nous ait contraint à abandonner une administration, où le succès avoit toujours suivi la pureté des intentions. * * * * *

Nous n'avons pas encore eu le temps d'éprouver le vuide que laisse l'absence des grandes affaires : nous n'avons senti que la crainte qu'elles ne prisent une route différente de celle que nous leur avons tracée : car la passion du bien public comme toutes les passions abstraites, doit être constante, puisque l'objet en est inaltérable.

Votre tendresse paternelle me paroît si bien placée, que je ne puis m'empêcher de la partager ; vos enfans

P

ont quelques défauts dans le caractère, mais ils nous enchantent, et vous m'avez appris à aimer l'histoire, qui m'avoit toujours paru jusques à présent un miroir exagéré de nos deformités, parceque les grands traits parvenaient seuls jusques à nous : à présent je la lis avec délices, cette histoire, où je crois voir à la fois l'esprit de tant de siècles concentré dans une seule tête, et les jugemens de toutes les nations aboutis à un seul jugement, qui les éclaire, et qui nous les rend avec toutes les graces de la nouveauté sans leur rien faire perdre, cependant, de leur air noble et antique. Vous ne devez pas douter du plaisir que vos succès m'ont fait goûter ; car depuis long temps je ne suis avertie de mon amour-propre que par ma sensibilité : je ne vous donnerai pas de conseils : je ne pourrois critiquer que vos opinions ou vos sentimens, et ce n'est pas de conseils qui peuvent les changer : vous avez d'ailleurs une manière d'écrire qui n'appartient qu'à vous : il faut que vous suiviez l'impulsion de votre génie ; et quiconque hasarderait d'autres avis que celui de vous livrer hardiment à vous même, ne seroit pas digne de vous admirer, n'y de sentir le prix inestimable d'une sublime singularité.

Nous formons le projet de passer l'été prochaine en Suisse, mais je n'ose encore m'en flatter, car monsieur Necker est très indécis dans les petites choses : où que j'aille, vos livres me suivront, et me feront goûter à la fois le plaisir et le bonheur par le double intérêt de l'auteur et de l'ouvrage : si vous y joignez quelques lettres, elles seront bien accueillies et bien senties : si vous n'écrivez point ... mais je ne veux pas m'arrêter sur le douloureux soupçon ; je finis ces longs discours, que la seule amitié peut pardonner : j'ai cru que vous me permettriez de dicter cette lettre : mes sentimens divers auxquels j'ai été en proie, ont épuisé mes forces ; mais si mes doigts ne sçauroient écrire sans fatigue, mon cœur et ma pensée en revanche, s'élancer au delà des mers, et ne sentent jamais de le faire.

C. N.

[TRANSLATION.]

I SHOULD reproach myself in a lively manner for having remained so long without answering the most impressive and engaging of letters, if the omission was attributable to neglect or idleness; but unhappily I have too good an excuse: M. Necker has been for a long time unwell, not in consequence of his regret at his resignation, but owing to his grief at being obliged to give it; for good people feel a moral necessity more invincible than a physical one. The uneasiness which I have endured in my apprehension for the health of M. Necker, has taught me to think little of any trouble which affects not our sensibility. When M. Necker undertook an important office, I thought I lent him to honour, and not to honours; and when the latter could only be preserved at the expense of the former, I resumed with transport the good of which I had deprived myself; and I possess too sensitive a soul to fear my inability to suffer for the happiness of a person who is dear to me. The retreat of M. Necker has been accompanied with the regret and astonishment of all France, and from the bottom of our hearts we are still unable to comprehend how we have been constrained to abandon an administration, the success of which was answerable to the purity of its intentions. * * * *

We have not yet had time to experience the void which follows the cessation of a connection with state affairs; we have only experienced a fear that they will take a direction different from that which we had traced out for them. A passion for the public good, like all other abstract passions, ought be the constant, since its object is unalterable.

Your paternal tenderness appears to me to be well bestowed: I cannot help sharing in it: your children* have some characteristic faults, but they

* The volumes of his History.

enchant us nevertheless, and you have taught me to love history, which has always appeared to me an exaggerated mirror of the deformities of mankind, because the more prominent features alone reach us. At present I read with delight that on which I contemplate at once the spirit of so many ages concentrated in a single head, and the opinions of so many nations corrected by a single judgment, which at the same time knows so well how to clear them up, and to convey them to us with all the graces of novelty, and yet without sacrificing their noble and ancient character. You ought not to doubt the pleasure which your success has caused me ; for a long time past I have been reminded of my self-love by my sensibility in this respect. I shall not give you advice ; I could only criticise your opinions and your sentiments, and it is not advice which can change them. You have, moreover, a manner of writing which belongs entirely to yourself. You must follow the impulse of your own genius ; and whoever gives you any other counsel than boldly to follow its dictates, is neither worthy to admire you, nor to estimate the inestimable value of exalted originality.

We propose to pass the approaching summer in Switzerland, but I dare not flatter myself that such will be the case. M. Necker is very undecided in minor points. Wherever I go, your books will follow me, and enable me to taste at once pleasure and happiness by my double interest in the author and the work. If you add to the favour a few letters, they will be received and appreciated ; if you do not write—but I will not pause upon so unpleasant a suspicion. I finish this long letter, which friendship alone can pardon. The various emotions to which I have recently been a prey have weakened my powers ; but if my fingers cannot hold the pen without fatigue, my heart and my imagination in revenge can pass beyond the seas, and never be weary in doing so.

C. N.

No. LXX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday, August 1776.

WE expect you at five o'clock Tuesday, without a sore throat. You have ere this heard of the shocking accident which takes up the attention of the town. Our old acquaintance *****. By his own indolence, rather than extravagance, his circumstances were embarrassed, and he had frequently declared himself tired of life. No public news; nor any material expected till the end of this, or the beginning of next month, when Howe will probably have collected his whole force. A tough business indeed. You see by their declaration, that they have now passed the Rubicon, and rendered the work of a treaty infinitely more difficult. You will perhaps say, so much the better; but I do assure you that the *thinking* friends of government are by no means sanguine. I take the opportunity of eating turtle with Garrick at Hampton. Adieu.

No. LXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Saturday, three-quarters past Eleven, 1776.

FOR the present I am so deeply engaged, that you must renounce the hasty apparition at Sheffield place; but if you should be very impatient, I will try (after the meeting) to run down, between the Friday and Monday, and bring you the last editions of things. At present *nought* but expectation. The attack on me is begun; an anonymous eighteen-penny pamphlet, which will get the author more glory in the next world than in this. The heavy troops, Watson and another, are on their march. Adieu.

No. LXXII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR WALLACE TO MR STRAHAN, DATED EDINBURGH, AUG. 30TH, 1776

ALAS for David Hume!* His friends have sustained a great loss in his death. He was interred yesterday, at a place he lately purchased in the burying-ground on the Calton.

“ For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind!”

A monument on that airy elevated cemetery, which, on account of a magnificent terrace now carried round the hill, is greatly frequented, will be extremely conspicuous, and must often call his name to remembrance. It has been remarked, that the same day on which Lucretius died, gave birth to Virgil; and amidst their late severe loss, philosophy and literature will probably find themselves not wholly disconsolate, on reflecting that the same year in which they were deprived of Hume, Gibbon arose; his superior in some respects. This gentleman's History of the Decline of the Roman Empire appears to me, in point of composition, incomparably the finest production in English, without any exception. I hardly thought the language capable of arriving at his correctness, perspicuity, and strength.

No. LXXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

1776.

I HOPE you bark and growl at my silence; growl and bark. This is not a time for correspondence.

* Mr Hume died at Edinburgh, August 25th, 1776.

Parliament, visits, dinners, suppers, and an hour or two stolen with difficulty for the Decline, leave but very little leisure. I send you the Gazette, and have scarcely anything to add, except that about five hundred of them have deserted to us, and that the New York incendiaries were immediately, and very justifiably, destined to the cord. Lord George Germaine, with whom I had a long conversation last night, was in high spirits, and hopes to reconquer Germany in America. On the side of Canada, he only fears Carleton's *slowness*, but entertains great expectations that the light troops and Indians, under sir William Johnson, who are sent from Oswego down the Mohawk river to Albany, will oblige the Provincials to give up the defence of the Lakes, for fear of being cut off. The report of a foreign war subsides. House of Commons dull, and opposition talk of suspending hostilities from despair.

An anonymous pamphlet and Dr Watson out against me; (in my opinion) the former feeble, and very illiberal; the latter uncommonly genteel. At last I have had a letter from Deyverdun; wretched excuses; nothing done; vexatious enough. To-morrow I write to Suard, a very skilful translator of Paris, who was here in the spring with the Neckers, to get him (if not too late) to undertake it. Adieu.

No. LXXIV.

MR GIBBON TO THE REV. DR WATSON (NOW BISHOP OF LANDAFF.)

Bentinck street, Nov. 2d, 1776.

MR GIBBON takes the earliest opportunity of presenting his compliments and thanks to Dr Watson, and of expressing his sense of the liberal treatment which he has received from so candid an adversary. Mr Gibbon entirely coincides in opinion with Dr Watson, that as their different sentiments, on a very

important period of history, are now submitted to the public, they both may employ their time in a manner much more useful, as well as agreeable, than they could possibly do by exhibiting a single combat in the amphitheatre of controversy. Mr Gibbon is therefore determined to resist the temptation of justifying, in a professed reply, any passages of his History, which might perhaps be easily cleared from censure and misapprehension; but he still reserves to himself the privilege of inserting in a future edition some occasional remarks and explanations of his meaning. If any calls of pleasure or business should bring Dr Watson to town, Mr Gibbon would think himself happy in being permitted to solicit the honour of his acquaintance.

No. LXXV.

DR WATSON TO MR GIBBON.

Cambridge, November 4th, 1776.

DR WATSON accepts with pleasure Mr Gibbon's polite invitation to a personal acquaintance. If he comes to town this winter, will certainly do himself the honour to wait upon him. Begs at the same time to assure Mr Gibbon, that he will be very happy to have an opportunity of shewing him every civility, if curiosity, or other motives, should bring him to Cambridge. Dr Watson can have some faint idea of Mr Gibbon's difficulty in resisting the temptation he speaks of, from having been of late in a situation somewhat similar himself. It would be very extraordinary if Mr Gibbon did not feel a parent's partiality for an offspring which has justly excited the admiration of all who have seen it; and Dr Watson would be the last person in the world to wish him to suppress any explanation which might tend to exalt its merits.

No. LXXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, November 7th, 1776.

LETTERS from Burgoyne. They embarked on the Lakes the 30th September, with eight hundred British sailors, six thousand regulars, and a naval force superior to any possible opposition: but the season was so far advanced, that they expected only to occupy and strengthen Ticonderoga, and afterwards to return and take up their winter quarters in Canada. Yesterday we had a surprize in the House, from a proclamation of the Howes, which made its first appearance in the Morning Post, and which nobody seems to understand. By this time, my lady may see that I have not much reason to fear my antagonists. Adien, till next Thursday.

No. LXXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Friday Evening, Nov. 22nd.

News from the Lakes. A naval combat, in which the Provincials were repulsed with considerable loss. They burnt and abandoned Crown Point. Carleton is besieging Ticonderoga. Carleton, I say; for he is there, and it is apprehended that Burgoyne is coming home. We dismissed the nabobs without a division. Burke and the attorney-general spoke very well. Adieu.

No. LXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bentinck street, Jan. 18th, 1777.

As I presume my lady does not make a practice of tumbling down stairs every day after dinner, by this

time the colours must have faded, and the high places (I mean the temples) are reduced to a proper level. But what, in the name of the great prince, is the meaning of her declining the Urban expedition? Is it the spontaneous result of her own proud spirit? or does it proceed from the secret machinations of her domestic tyrant? At all events, I expect you will both remember your engagement of next Saturday in Bentinck street, with Donna Catherina, the Mountaineer,* &c. Things go on very prosperously in America. Howe is himself in the Jerseys, and will push at least as far as the Delaware river. The continental (perhaps *now* the rebel) army is in a great measure dispersed, and Washington, who wishes to cover Philadelphia, has not more than six or seven thousand men with him. Clinton designs to conquer Rhode Island in his way home. But, what I think of much greater consequence, a province made its submission, and desired to be reinstated in the peace of the king. It is indeed only poor little Georgia; and the application was made to governor Tonyn of Florida. Some disgust at a violent step of the congress, who removed the president of their provincial assembly, a leading and popular man, co-operated with the fear of the Indians, who began to amuse themselves with the exercise of scalping on their back settlements. Town fills, and we are mighty agreeable. Last year, on the queen's birth-day, sir G. Warren had his diamond star cut off his coat; this day the same accident happened to him again, with another star worth seven hundred pounds. He had better compound by the year. Adieu.

* The hon. general Simon Fraser.

No. LXXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Almack's, Wednesday Evening.

IN due obedience to thy dread commands I write. But what shall I say? My life, though more lively than yours, is almost as uniform. A very little reading and writing in the morning, bones or guts* from two to four, pleasant dinners from five to eight, and afterwards clubs, with an occasional assembly, or supper. America affords nothing very satisfactory; though we have many flying reports, you may be assured that we are ignorant of the consequences of Trenton, &c. Charles Fox is now at my elbow, declaiming on the impossibility of keeping America, since a victorious army has been unable to maintain any extent of posts in the single province of Jersey. Lord North is out of danger—we trembled for his important existence. I now expect that my lady and you should fix the time for the promised visitation to Bentinck street. March and April are open, chuse. Adieu.

No. LXXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

1777.

You deserve, and we exult in your weather and disappointments. Why would you bury yourself? I dined in Downing street Thursday last; and I think Wedderburne was at least as agreeable a companion as your timber surveyor could be. Lee is certainly taken, but lord North does not apprehend he is coming home. We are not clear whether he behaved

* Mr Gibbon at this time attended Dr Hunter's anatomical lectures.

with courage or pusillanimity when he surrendered himself; but colonel Keene told me to-day, that he had seen a letter from Lee since his confinement. "He imputes his being taken to the alertness of Harcourt, and cowardice of his own guard; hopes he shall meet his fate with fortitude; but laments that freedom is not likely to find a resting place in any part of the globe." It is said he was to succeed Washington. We know nothing certain of the Hessians; but there *has* been a blow. Adieu.

No. LXXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Saturday Night, April 12th, 1777

YOUR dispatch is gone to ***, and I flatter myself that by your assistance I shall be enabled to lose a thousand pounds upon Lenborough before I return from Paris. The day of my departure is not absolutely fixed; Sunday seven-night, the twenty-seventh instant, is talked of: but if any India business should come on after the civil list, it will occasion some delay, otherwise things are in great forwardness. Mrs Gibbon is an enemy to the whole plan; and I must answer, in a long letter, two very ingenious objections which she has started. 1st. That I shall be confined, or put to death by the priests; and, 2dly, That I shall sully my *moral* character, by making love to Necker's wife. Before I go, I will consult Newton about a power of attorney for you. By the bye, I wish you would remember a sort of promise, and give me one day before I go. We talk chiefly of the marquis de la Fayette, who was here a few weeks ago. He is about twenty, with a hundred and thirty thousand livres a year; the nephew of Noailles, who is ambassador here. He has bought the duke of Kingston's yacht, and is gone to join the Americans. The court *appear* to be angry with him. Adieu.

No. LXXXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Atwood's, Saturday Night, April 19th, 1777.

It is not possible as yet to fix the day of my departure. That circumstance depends on the state of India, and will not be determined till the general court of next Wednesday. I know from the *first* authority, if the violence of the proprietors about the Pigot can be checked in the India house, by the influence of a government majority, the minister does not wish to exert the omnipotence of Parliament; and I shall be dismissed from hence time enough to set forwards on Thursday the first of May. On the contrary, should we be involved in those perplexing affairs, they may easily detain me till the middle of next month. But as all this is very uncertain, I direct you and my lady to appear in town to-morrow seven-night. I have many things to say. We have been animated this week; and, notwithstanding the strict economy recommended by Charles Fox and John Wilkes, we have paid the royal debts. Adieu.

No. LXXXIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Wednesday Night, April 23d, 1777.

It is uncertain whether India comes to Westminster this year, and it is certain that Gibbon goes to Paris next Saturday seven-night. Therefore Holroyd must appear in town the beginning of next week. Gibbon wants the cordial of his presence before the journey. My lady *must* come.

No. LXXXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Dover, Tuesday Evening, May 6th, 1777.

My expedition does not begin very auspiciously. The wind, which for some days had been fair, paid me the compliment of changing on my arrival; and, though I immediately secured a vessel, it has been impossible to make the least use of it during the whole of this tedious day. It seems doubtful whether I shall get out tomorrow morning, and the captain assures me that the passage will have the double advantage of being both cold and rough. Last night a small privateer, fitted out at Dunkirk, with a commission from Dr Franklin, attacked, took, and has carried into Dunkirk road, the Harwich packet. The king's messenger had just time to throw his dispatches overboard. He passed through this town about four o'clock this afternoon, in his return to London. As the alarm is now given, our American friend will probably remain quiet, or will soon be caught; so that I have not *much* apprehension for my personal safety; but if so daring an outrage is not followed by punishment and restitution, it may become a very serious business, and may possibly shorten my stay at Paris.

Adieu. I shall write by the first opportunity, either from Calais or Philadelphia.

No. LXXXV.

MR GIBBON TO MR HOLROYD.

Calais, Wednesday, May 7th, 1777.

Post nubila Phœbus. A pleasant passage, an excellent house, a good dinner, with lord Coleraine, whom I found here. Easy custom-house officers, fine weather, &c. I am detained to-night by the temptation of a French comedy, in a theatre at the end of

Dessein's garden; but shall be in motion tomorrow early, and hope to dine at Paris Saturday. Adieu. I think I am a punctual correspondent; but this beginning is too good to last.

No. LXXXVI.

DR WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

SIR, College of Edinburgh, June 5th, 1777.

I HAVE desired Mr Strahan to take the liberty of sending you, in my name, a copy of the 'History of America,' which I hope you will do me the honour of accepting as a testimony, not only of my respect, but of my gratitude, for the instruction which I have received from your writings, as well as the credit you have done me, by the most obliging manner in which you have mentioned my name. I wish the present work may not diminish sentiments so flattering to me. I have taken much pains to obtain the approbation of those whose good opinion one ought to be solicitous to secure, and I trust that my industry at least will be applauded.

An unlucky indisposition prevented me from executing a scheme which I had formed, of passing two months of last spring in London. The honour of being made known to you, was one of the pleasures with which I had flattered myself. But I hope to be more fortunate next year; and beg that you will believe that I am, with great respect, sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

No. LXXXVII.

MR GIBBON TO DR ROBERTSON.

SIR,

Paris, 1777.

WHEN I ventured to assume the character of historian, the first, the most natural, but at the same time the most ambitious, wish which I entertained was to

obtain the approbation of Dr Robertson and of Mr Hume; two names which friendship united, and which posterity will never separate. I shall not therefore attempt to dissemble, though I cannot easily express, the pleasure which I received from your obliging letter, as well as from the intelligence of your most valuable present. The satisfaction which I should otherwise have enjoyed, in common with the public, will now be heightened by a sentiment of a more personal and flattering nature; and I shall frequently whisper to myself, that I have in some measure deserved the esteem of the writer whom I admire.

A short excursion which I have made to this place, during the summer months, has occasioned some delay in my receiving your letter, and will prevent my possessing till my return the copy of your history, which you so politely desired Mr Strahan to send me. But I have already gratified the eagerness of my impatience; and although I was obliged to return the book much sooner than I could have wished, I have seen enough to convince me that the present publication will support, and, if possible, will extend the fame of the author; that the materials are collected with diligence and arranged with skill; that the first book contains a learned and satisfactory account of the progress of discovery; that the achievements, the dangers, and the crimes, of the Spanish adventurers are related with a temperate spirit; and that the most original, perhaps the most curious, portion of the history of human manners is at length rescued from the hands of sophists and declaimers. Lord Stormont, and the few in this capital, who have had an opportunity of perusing the 'History of America,' unanimously concur in the same sentiments. Your work is already become a favourite topic of public conversation; and M. Suard is repeatedly pressed, in my hearing, to fix the time when his translation will appear.

I flatter myself you will not abandon your design of

visiting London next winter; as I already anticipate, in my own mind, the advantages which I shall derive from so pleasing and so honourable a connection. In the meanwhile, I should esteem myself happy if you could think of any literary commission, in the execution of which I might be useful to you at Paris, where I propose to stay till very near the meeting of parliament. Let me, for instance, suggest an inquiry, which cannot be indifferent to you, and which might perhaps be within my reach. A few days ago I dined with Bagniouski, the famous adventurer, who escaped from his exile at Kamschatka, and returned into Europe by Japan and China. His narrative was amusing, though I do not know how far his veracity, in point of circumstances, may safely be trusted. It was his original design to penetrate through the north-east passage; and he actually followed the coast of Asia as high as the latitude of $67^{\circ} 35'$, till his progress was stopped by the ice, in a streight between the two continents, which was only seven leagues broad. Thence he descended along the coast of America, as low as cape Mendocin; but was repulsed by contrary winds, in his attempts to reach the port of Acapulco. The journal of his voyage, with his original charts, is now at Versailles, in the *Depôt des Affaires Etrangères*; and if you conceived that it would be of any use to you for a second edition, I would try what might be obtained; though I am not ignorant of that mean jealousy which you yourself have experienced, and so deservedly stigmatised. I am, &c.

No. LXXXVIII.

DR ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

SIR,

I HAD the honour of your obliging letter, and I should be a very proud man indeed if I were not vain of the approbation which you are pleased to bestow upon me. As you will now have had an opportunity

Q 2

to peruse the book, which you had only seen when you wrote to me, I indulge myself in the hopes that the favourable opinion you had formed of it is not diminished. I am much pleased with your mentioning my friendship with Mr Hume; I have always considered that as one of the most fortunate and honourable circumstances of my life. It is a felicity of the age and country in which we live, that men of letters can enter the same walk of science, and go on successfully, without feeling one sentiment of envy or rivalry. In the intercourse between Mr Hume and me, we always found *something to blame*, as well as *something to commend*. I had received frequently very valuable criticisms on my performances from him; and I have sometimes ventured to offer him my strictures on his works. Permit me to hope for the same indulgence from you. If, in reading the History of America, anything, either in the matter or style, has occurred to you as reprehensible, I will deem it a most obliging favour if you will communicate it freely to me. I am certain of profiting by such a communication.

I return you thanks for your frank offer of executing any literary commission for me. I accept of it without ceremony, and am flattered with the idea of receiving such aid from your hands. I knew nothing of Bagniouski's adventures, but what was published in some newspaper. If one can rely on his veracity, what he relates must be very interesting to me. If you had been writing the History of America, the question concerning the mode of peopling it, might not perhaps have occupied your attention very much. But it was proper for me to consider it more fully. Bagniouski (if he may be credited) has seen what it may be useful for me to know. I can see no reason why the court of France should be shy about communicating his journal, and the charts which illustrate it; possibly my name may operate somewhat towards obtaining a copy of both; your interposition, I am con-

fidest, will do a great deal. It will be very illiberal; indeed, if such a communication were refused. My lord Stormont (by whose attention I have been much honoured) would not decline to give his aid, were that necessary. But if your court remembers that of Spain, I am afraid every proposal from an ambassador is received with some degree of jealousy. Your own private application will, I apprehend, be more effectual. As it is probable that a second edition may go to press early in the winter, it will add to the favour, if you can soon inform me concerning the success of your negociation. As this is something in the style of the *corps diplomatique*, allow me to recommend one of its members to you. Mr Fullarton, the new secretary of the embassy, is a particular friend of mine. He is a young man of such qualities both of head and heart, that I am sure you will esteem and love him. Please remember me to him. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

LXXXIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Paris, June 16th, 1777.

I TOLD you what would infallibly happen, and you know enough of the nature of the beast not to be surprised at it. I have now been at Paris exactly five weeks; during which time I have not written to any person whatsoever within the British dominions, except two lines of notification to Mrs Gibbon. The dæmon of procrastination has at length yielded to the genius of friendship, assisted indeed by the powers of fear and shame. But when I have seated myself before a table, and begin to revolve all that I have seen and tasted during this busy period, I feel myself oppressed and confounded; and I am very near

throwing away the pen, and resigning myself to indolent despair. A complete history would require a volume at least as corpulent as the *Decline and Fall*; and if I attempt to select and abridge, besides the difficulty of the choice, there occur so many things which cannot properly be entrusted to paper, and so many others of too slight a texture to support the journey, that I am almost tempted to reserve for our future conversations the detail of my pleasures and occupations. But as I am sensible that you are *rigid* and impatient, I will try to convey, in a few words, a general idea of my situation as a man of the world, and as a man of letters. You remember that the Neckers were my principal dependance; and the reception which I have met with from them very far surpassed my most sanguine expectations. I do not indeed lodge in their house, (as it might incite the jealousy of the husband, and procure me a *lettre de cachet*,) but I live very much with them, and dine and sup whenever they have company, which is almost every day, and whenever I like it, for they are not in the least *exigeans*. Mr Walpole gave me an introduction to madame du Deffand, an agreeable young lady of eighty-two years of age, who has constant suppers, and the best company in Paris. When you see the duke of Richmond, he will give you an account of that house, where I meet him almost every evening. Ask him about madame de Cambis. I have met the duke of Choiseul at his particular request, dined by *accident* with Franklin, conversed with the emperor, been presented at court, and gradually, or rather rapidly, I find my acquaintance spreading over the most valuable parts of Paris. They pretend to like me, and whatever you may think of French professions, I am convinced that some at least are sincere. On the other hand, I feel myself easy and happy in their company, and only regret that I did not come over two or three months sooner. Though Paris throughout the summer pro-

mises me a very agreeable society, yet I am hurt every day by the departure of men and women whom I begin to know with some familiarity, the departure of officers for their governments and garrisons, of bishops for their dioceses, and even of country gentlemen for their estates, as a rural taste gains ground in this country. So much for the general idea of my acquaintance; details would be endless, yet unsatisfactory. You may add to the pleasures of society those of the spectacles and promenades, and you will find that I lead a very agreeable life; let me just condescend to observe, that it is not extravagant. After decking myself out with silks and silver, the ordinary establishment of coach, lodging, servants, eating, and pocket expenses, does not exceed sixty pounds *per* month. Yet I have two footmen in handsome liveries behind my coach, and my apartment is hung with damask. Adieu for the present: I have more to say, but were I to attempt any farther progress, you must wait another post; and you have already waited long enough, of all conscience.

Let me just in two words give you an idea of my day. I am now going (nine o'clock) to the king's library, where I shall stay till twelve; as soon as I am dressed, I set out to dine with the duke de Nivernois: shall go from thence to the French comedy, into the princess de Beauveau's loge grillée, and cannot quite determine whether I shall sup at madame du Defand's, madame Necker's, or the Sardinian ambassadress's. Once more adieu.

I embrace my lady and *bambini*. I shall with cheerfulness execute any of her commissions.

No. XC.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 13th, 1777.

WELL, and who is the culprit now? Thus far had I written in the pride of my heart, and fully deter-

mined to inflict an epistle upon you, even before I received any answer to my former; I was very near a bull. But this forward half line lay ten days barren and inactive, till its generative powers were excited by the missive which I received yesterday. What a wretched piece of work do we seem to be making of it in America! The greatest force which any European power ever ventured to transport into that continent, is not strong enough even to attack the enemy; the naval strength of Great Britain is not sufficient to prevent the Americans (they have almost lost the appellation of rebels) from receiving every assistance that they wanted; and in the meantime you are obliged to call out the militia to defend your own coasts against their privateers. You possibly may expect from me some account of the design and policy of the French court, but I choose to decline that task for two reasons: 1st, Because you may find them laid open in every newspaper; and 2dly, Because I live too much with their courtiers and ministers to know anything about them. I shall only say, that I am not under any immediate apprehensions of a war with France. It is much more pleasant as well as profitable to view in safety the raging of the tempest, occasionally to pick up some pieces of the wreck, and to improve their trade, their agriculture, and their finances, while the two countries are *lento collisa duello*. Far from taking any step to put a speedy end to this astonishing dispute, I should not be surprised if next summer they were to lend their cordial assistance to England, as to the weaker party. As to my personal engagement with the D. of R., I recollect a few slight skirmishes, but nothing that deserves the name of a general engagement. The extravagance of some disputants, both French and English, who have espoused the cause of America, sometimes inspires me with an extraordinary vigour. Upon the whole, I find it much easier to defend the justice than the policy of our measures; but there are certain cases, where

whatever is repugnant to sound policy ceases to be just.

The more I see of Paris, the more I like it. The regular course of the society in which I live is easy, polite, and entertaining; and almost every day is marked by the acquisition of some new acquaintance, who is worth cultivating, or who, at least, is worth remembering. To the great admiration of the French, I regularly dine and regularly sup, drink a dish of strong coffee after each meal, and find my stomach a citizen of the world. The spectacles, (particularly the Italian, and above all the French comedies, which are open the whole summer, afford me an agreeable relaxation from company; and to shew you that I frequent them from taste, and not from idleness, I have not yet seen the Colisée, the Vauxhall, the Boulevards, or any of those places of entertainment which constitute Paris to most of our countrymen. Occasional trips to dine and sup in some of the thousand country-houses which are scattered round the environs of Paris, serve to vary the scene. In the meanwhile the summer insensibly glides away, and the fatal month of October approaches, when I must change the house of madame Necker for the House of Commons. I regret that I could not choose the winter, instead of the summer, for this excursion: I should have found many valuable persons, and should have preserved others whom I have lost as I began to know them. The duke de Choiseul, who deserves attention both for himself and for keeping the best house in Paris, passes seven months of the year in Touraine; and though I have been tempted, I consider with horror a journey of sixty leagues into the country. The princess of Beauveau, who is a most superior woman, has been absent above six weeks, and does not return till the 24th of this month. A large body of recruits will be assembled by the Fontainebleau journey; but in order to have a thorough knowledge of this splendid country, I ought

to stay till the month of January; and if I could be sure that Opposition would be as tranquil as they were last year— I think your life has been as animated, or, at least, as tumultuous, and I envy you lady Payne, &c. much more than either the primate, or the chief-justice. Let not the generous breast of my lady be torn by the black servants of envy. She still possesses the first place in the sentiments of her slave; but the adventure of the fan was a mere accident, owing to lord Carmarthen. Adieu. I think you may be satisfied. I say nothing of my terrestrial affairs.

No. XCI.

M. BUFFON A M. GIBBON.

Ce 25th Oct. 1777.

JE reçois, monsieur, comme une marque précieuse de votre estime et de votre amitié cet excellent ouvrage que je ne connoissois que par la traduction; je le lirai avec tout l'empressement que me donnent les sentimens que vous m'avez inspiré. J'ai souvent admiré dans la conversation les traits de génie que j'aurai le plaisir de voir dans tout son développement. Recevez mes remercimens, monsieur, et les tendres adieux d'un homme qui vous respecte et vous aime autant et plus qu'il ne peut vous l'exprimer.

BUFFON.

[TRANSLATION].

25th Oct. 1777.

- I HAVE received, sir, as an invaluable proof of your and of your friendship, the excellent work can know only by translation. I shall read all the interest belonging to the sentiments which you have inspired me. I have often ad-conversation those traits of genius, which I er have the pleasure of witnessing in their

full developement. Receive the thanks, sir, and the affectionate advices of one who respects and loves you as much and more than he can express.

BUFFON.

No. XLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck street, Saturday, Nov. 1777.

HAD you four horns as well as four eyes and four hands, I should still maintain that you are the most unreasonable monster in the creation. My pain is lively, my weakness excessive, the season cold, and only twelve days remain to the meeting. Far from thinking of trips into the country, I shall be well satisfied if I am on my legs the 20th, in the medical sense of the word. At present I am a corpse, carried about by four arms which do not belong to me. Yet I try to smile; I salute the hen and chickens. Adieu. Writing is really painful.

No. CXII.

MADAME DU DEFFAND à M. GIBBON.

Paris, ce 12 Novembre 1777.

J'ATTENDOIS que M. Walpole vous eût vu, monsieur, pour répondre à votre très aimable lettre de Calais. J'apprends aujourd'hui par lui que vous avez la goutte, qu'il vous a été rendre visite, et que vous avez bien voulu lui parler beaucoup de moi. Il ne me mande point ce que vous lui en avez dit, mais votre bonté naturelle, et votre excessive indulgence, ne me laissent aucune inquiétude. Il pourra vous dire à son tour combien je vous regrette; rien ne peut vous remplacer; je pense sans cesse aux momens agréables que j'ai passés avec vous; jamais je n'ai trouvé personne qui eut une conversation aussi facile, aussi charmante. Je paye bien cher le plaisir qu'il

R

m'a fait,—elle m'a rendue bien plus difficile que je n'étois.

J'ai fort peu vu M. et Mad. Necker depuis votre départ. J'ai soupé une fois en tiers avec eux et eu une fois Mad. Necker chez moi. Nous avons parlé de M. Gibbon, et de quoi encore? de M. Gibbon, toujours de M. Gibbon. J'ai accablée Mad. de Cambis de reproches et d'injures; elle m'a paru l'être de remords et de regrets. La comtesse de Boufflers me sçaura très bon gré si je vous parle d'elle; enfin tout ce qui vous connoit, vous estime, vous aime, et désire de vous revoir, et moi plus que personne au monde, je vous prie de le croire.

Le terme de 1779 est bien long, mais cependant j'ose me flatter de le voir arriver: je ne renonce point encore au plaisir de vous entendre, et pour me l'assurer j'ai eu recours à l'abbé de St Julien; il a visité mes oreilles, il entreprend ma guérison, il ne veut pas que je perde toute espérance; mais cette vertu théologale doit être précédée de celle de la foi, et l'on prétend que celle-ci ne m'est pas familière.

Ne dites point à M. Walpole la crainte que j'ai de devenir sourde; si ce malheur m'arrive, il n'est pas prochain, et je serai encore long tems, à ce que j'espère, en état d'entendre la lecture de vos lettres. Je ne me flatte pas qu'elles soient fréquentes, mais je vous prie de répondre à celle-ci, et de m'apprendre des nouvelles de votre goutte; elle a grand tort de vous attaquer, vous qui sçavez si bien employer tous vos momens; elle ne devoit se placer que sur les desœuvrés.

J'attends avec impatience les deux volumes que me promet M. de Septchènes; j'ai été parfaitement contente du premier, je l'ai été aussi infiniment de votre lettre à Mad. de Cambis. Toutes les louanges que vous lui donnez sont vraies, et d'un discernement exquis; c'est à vous, monsieur, à qu' il appartient de peindre.

[TRANSLATION.]

Paris, 12th Nov. 1777.

I EXPECTED that Mr Walpole would have seen you in the way of reply to your amiable letter from Calais. I now learn from him that you have the gout, that he has paid you a visit, and that you have spoken much to him of me. He has not told me what you have said of me, but your good-nature and great indulgence leave me without inquietude. He might say to you in return, how much I regret you; nobody can replace you, and I think, without ceasing, of the agreeable moments which I have passed in your company: never did I know one who was so facile and charming in conversation; but I shall pay dearly for the pleasure which it has given me, as it has rendered me more difficult to please than heretofore.

I have seldom seen M. and Mad. Necker since your departure. I have supped once, as a third, with them, and have had Mad. Necker once at my house. We have spoken of Mr Gibbon, and of what else?—of Mr Gibbon, always of Mr Gibbon. I have loaded Mad. de Cambis with reproaches and complaints, and she appears to me to be sinking under remorse and regret. The countess of Boufflers will serve me a good turn if I speak to you of her; in short, all who know you, esteem and love you, and desire to see you again; and myself, I entreat you to believe, more than every other person.

The year 1779 is a distant period, but, in the meantime, I flatter myself with the hope of seeing it arrive; neither do I yet give up the idea of listening to you; and, in order to be assured of it, I have had recourse to the abbé de St Julien to examine my ears; he has undertaken my cure, and wishes me to indulge in hope; but this theological virtue ought to be preceded by that of faith, and it is asserted that with the latter I am not much acquainted.

Do not mention to Mr Walpole my fear of becom-

ing deaf; should this misfortune occur, it will not be immediately; and I trust I shall long be able to hear the reading of your letters: I do not flatter myself that they will be frequent, but I request you to answer the present one, and let me know the state of your gout. It is inexcusable in attacking one so well employed: it ought to attach itself only to the unoccupied.

I expect with impatience the two volumes promised me by M. Septchênes.* I have been perfectly satisfied with the first, as I have also been with your letter to madame de Cambis. All the praises which you bestow upon her are her due, and appropriated with exquisite discernment. It belongs to you, sir, to portray.

No. XCIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Friday, Nov. 14th, 1777.

I do not like this disorder in your eyes: and when I consider your temperance and activity, I cannot understand why any spring of the machine should ever be deranged. With regard to myself, the gout has behaved in a very honourable manner; after a complete conquest, and after making me feel his power for some days, the generous enemy has disdained to abuse his victory, or to torment any longer an unresisting victim. He has already ceased to torture the lower extremities of your humble servant; the swelling is so amazingly diminished, that they are no longer above twice their ordinary size. Yesterday I moved about the room with the laborious majesty of crutches; today I have exchanged them for a stick; and by the beginning of next week I hope, with due precaution, to take the air, and to inure myself

* Who translated the *Decline and Fall* into the French language.

for the interesting representation of Thursday. How cursedly unlucky! I wanted to see you both: a thousand things to say and to hear, and everything of that kind broken to pieces. If you are not able to come to Bentinck street, I must contrive to steal three or four vacant days during the session, and run down to Sheffield. The town fills, and I begin to have numerous levees and couchees; more properly the latter. We are still in expectation, but in the meanwhile we believe (I mean ministers) that the news of Howe's victory and the taking of Philadelphia are true. Adieu

No. XCV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

December 2nd, 1777.

By the inclosed you will see that America is not *yet* conquered. Opposition are very lively; and though in the House we keep our numbers, there seems to be an universal desire of peace, even on the most humble conditions. Are you still fierce?

No. XCVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Monday Night, December 1777.

I CONGRATULATE your noble firmness, as I suppose it must arise from the knowledge of some hidden resources which will enable us to open the next campaign with new armies of fifty or sixty thousand men. But I believe you will find yourself obliged to carry on this glorious war almost alone. It would be idle to dispute any more about politics, as we shall so soon have an opportunity of a personal combat. Your journey gives me some hopes that you have not entirely lost your reason. Your bed shall be ready.

R 2

No. XCVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

House of Commons, Thursday, Dec. 4th, 1777.

DREADFUL news indeed! You will see them partly in the papers, and we have not yet any particulars. An English army of nearly ten thousand men laid down their arms, and surrendered prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to England, and of never serving against America. They had fought bravely, and were three days without eating. Bourgoyne is said to have received three wounds. General Fraser, with two thousand men, killed. Colonel Ackland likewise killed. A general cry for peace. Adieu. We have constant late days.

No. XCVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE REV. DR CHELSUM.

SIR,

Bentinck street, Feb. 20th, 1778.

THE officious readiness of offering any printed criticism to the notice of a stranger, who is himself the object of it, must be received either as a compliment or an insult. When Dr Watson, the divinity professor of Cambridge, was so obliging as to send me his candid and ingenious apology, I thought it incumbent on me to acknowledge his politeness, and, with suitable expressions of regard, to solicit the pleasure of his acquaintance. A different mode of controversy calls for a different behaviour; and I should deem myself wanting in a just sense of my own honour, if I did not immediately return into the hands of Mr Batt your most extraordinary present of a book, of which almost every page is stained with the epithets—I shall take leave to say the undeserved epithets—of *ungenerous, unmanly, indecent, illiberal, partial*; and in which your adversary is repeatedly charged with *being deficient in common candour, with studiously*

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

concealing the truth, violating the faith of history, &c. This consideration will not however prevent me from procuring a copy of your Remarks, with the intention of correcting any involuntary mistakes,—and I cannot be conscious of any other,—which in so large a subject your industry, or that of your colleagues, may very possibly have observed. But I must not suffer myself to be diverted from the prosecution of an important work by the invidious task of controversy and recrimination. Whatever faults in your performance I might fairly impute to want of attention or excess of zeal, be assured, sir, that they shall sleep in peace; and you may safely inform your readers, that Suidas was a heathen four centuries after the heathenism of the Greeks had ceased to exist in the world.

I am, sir,
Your obedient humble servant,
E. GIBBON.

No. XCIX.

THE REV. DR GHELSUM TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

SIR, Oxford, March 6th, 1778.

PERMIT me to assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that no insult, such as I collect from your letter you attribute to me, was ever intended by me.

I had reason to think from several circumstances, that my not having sent my Remarks to you in their first form had been considered by you as a want of attention, and I was very ready to pay what others gave me reason to expect would be received as a mark of civility. I do not mean here to refer to Mr Batt.

My determination was the result of a deference to the opinions of others; and it arose in no degree from an "*officious readiness*," to which you attribute it. I may be accused of an error in judgment, but I cannot justly be accused of any greater offence.

Concerned as I am at my mistake, I am most of all concerned that so esteemed a friend as Mr Batt should have been employed in a very unpleasant mediation between us.

As it is the sole object of this letter to give you every possible assurance of my having intended a compliment in what has unfortunately been received as an insult, I should have concluded here, but that I am anxious to do myself the justice of pointing out to you, that you have unwarily imputed to me one expression (as I apprehend) wholly without foundation.

On the most diligent recollection I cannot remember that I have anywhere said—and I am sure I never intended to say—that you have “*studiously*” concealed the truth. I am, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

J. CHELSUM.

No. C.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

February 23d, 1778.

You do not readily believe in preternatural miscarriages of letters; nor I neither. Listen, however, to a plain and honest narrative. This morning after breakfast, as I was ruminating on *your* silence, Thomas, my new footman, with confusion in his looks and stammering on his tongue, produced a letter reasonably soiled, which he was to have brought me the day of his arrival, and which had lain forgotten from that time in his pocket. To shorten as much as possible the suspense, I immediately inquired whether any method of conveyance could be devised more expeditious than the post, and was fortunately informed of your coachman's intentions. You probably know the heads of the plan: an act of Parliament to declare that we never *had* any intention of taxing America—another act to empower the crown

to name commissioners authorised to suspend hostilities by sea and land, as well as all obnoxious acts; and, in short, to grant everything except independence. Opposition, after expressing their doubts whether the lance of Achilles could cure the wound which it had inflicted, could not refuse their assent to the principles of conduct which they themselves had always recommended. * Yet you must acknowledge, that in a business of this magnitude there may arise several important questions which, without a spirit of faction, will deserve to be debated. Whether Parliament ought not to name the commissioners? Whether it would not be better to repeal the obnoxious acts ourselves? I do not find that the world, that is, a few people whom I happen to converse with, are much inclined to praise lord North's ductility of temper. In the service of next Friday you will, however, take notice of the injunction given by the liturgy:—"And all the people shall say after the *minister*, Turn us again, O Lord; and so shall we be turned." While we consider whether we shall negotiate, I fear the French have been more diligent. It is positively asserted, both in private and in parliament, and not contradicted by the ministers, that on the fifth of this month a treaty of commerce (which naturally leads to a war) was signed at Paris with the independent States of America. Yet there still remains a hope that England may obtain the preference. The two greatest countries in Europe are fairly running a race for the favour of America. Adieu.

No. CI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

February 28th, 1778.

* * * * * As to politics, we should easily fill pages, and therefore had better be silent. You are

mistaken in supposing that the bills are opposed; some particular objections have been stated, and in the *only* division I voted with government.

No. CII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Almack's, Saturday Night, March 21st, 1778.

As business thickens, and you may expect me to write sometimes, I shall lay down one rule; totally to avoid political argument, conjecture, lamentation, declamation, &c. which would fill pages, not to say volumes; and to confine myself to short authentic pieces of intelligence, for which I may be able to afford moments and lines. Hear then—The French ambassador went off yesterday morning, not without some slight expressions of ill-humour from John Bull. Lord Stormont is probably arrived to-day. No *immediate* declaration, except on our side. A report (but vague) of an action in the Bay, between La Motte Piquet and Digby: the former has five ships and three frigates, with three large store-ships under convoy; the latter has eleven ships of the line. If the Frenchman should sail to the mouth of the Delaware, he may possibly be followed and shut up. When Franklin was received at Versailles, Deane went in the same character to Vienna, and Arthur Lee to Madrid. Notwithstanding the reports of an action in Silesia, they subside; and I have seen a letter from Eliot at Berlin of the tenth instant, without any mention of actual hostilities, and even speaking of the impending war as not absolutely inevitable. Last Tuesday the first payment of the loan of six hundred thousand pounds was certainly made; and as it would otherwise be forfeited, it is a security for the remainder. I have not yet got the intelligence you want about former prices of stock in critical times. These are surely such. *Diri Vale.* Send me some

good news from Bucks; in spite of the war, I must sell. We want you in town. Simon Fraser is impatient; but if you come without my lady, every door will be shut.

No. CIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Almack's, Friday, June 12th, 1778.

****'s letter gave me that sort of satisfaction which one may receive from a good physician who, after a careful examination, pronounces your case incurable. But no more of that. I take up the pen, as I suppose by this time you begin to swear at my silence. Yet literally (a bull) I have not a word to say. Since D'Estaing's fleet has passed through the Gut—I leave you to guess where it must have got out—it has been totally forgotten, and the most wonderful lethargy and oblivion, of war and peace, of Europe and of America, seems to prevail. Lord Chatham's funeral was meanly attended; and government ingeniously contrived to secure the double odium of suffering the thing to be done, and of doing it with an ill grace. Their chief conversation at Almack's is about tents, drill-serjeants, subdivisions, firings, &c., and I am revered as a veteran. Adieu. When do you return? If it suits your evolutions, aunt Kitty and myself meditate a Sussex journey next week. I embrace my lady.

No. CIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Wednesday Evening, July 1778.

Your plan of operations is clear and distinct; yet, notwithstanding your zeal, and the ideas of ducal discipline, I think you will be more and longer at Sheffield place than you imagine. However, I am

disposed to advance my journey as much as possible. I want to see you; my martial ardour makes me look to Coxheath; necessity obliges me to think of Beriton; and I feel something of a very new inclination to taste the sweets of the country. Aunt Kitty shares the same sentiments; but various obstacles will not allow us to be with you before Saturday, or perhaps Sunday evening; I say *evening*, as we mean to take the cool part of the day, and shall probably arrive after supper. Keppel's return has occasioned infinite and inexpressible consternation, which gradually changes into discontent against him. He is ordered out again with three or four large ships; two of ninety, two of seventy-four, and the fiftieth regiment as marines. In the meantime the French, with a superior fleet, are masters of the sea; and our outward-bound East and West India trade is in the most imminent danger. Adieu.

No. CV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Tuesday Night, November 1778.

You sometimes complain that I do not send you early news; but you will now be satisfied with receiving a full and true account of all the parliamentary transactions of *next* Thursday. In town we think it an excellent piece of humour,* (the author is Tickell). Burke and C. Fox are pleased with their own speeches; but serious patriots groan that such things should be turned to farce. We seem to have a chance of an additional Dutch war: you may depend upon its being a very important business, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without either loss or shame. *Vale*.

* The title of the pamphlet—*Anticipation*.

No. CVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Almack's, Wednesday Evening, 1778.

I DELAYED writing, not so much through indolence, as because I expected every post to hear from you. The state of Beriton is uncertain, incomprehensible, tremendous. It would be endless to send you the folios of Hugonin, but I have inclosed you one of his most picturesque epistles, on which you may meditate. Few offers; one, promising enough, came from a gentleman at Camberwell. I detected him, with masterly skill and diligence, to be only an attorney's clerk, without money, credit, or experience. I have written as yet in vain to sir John Shelley, about Hearsay; perhaps you might get intelligence. I much fear that the Beriton expedition is necessary; but it has occurred to me that, if I *met*, instead of *accompanying* you, it would save me a journey of above one hundred miles. That reflection led to another of a very impudent nature; *viz.* that if I did not accompany you, I certainly could be of no use to you or myself on the spot: that I had much rather, while you examined the premises, pass the time in a horse-pond; and that I had still rather pass it in my library with the *Decline and Fall*. But that would be an effort of friendship worthy of Theseus or Pirithous: modern times would hardly credit, much less imitate, such exalted virtue. No news from America; yet there are people, large ones too, who talk of conquering it next summer with the help of twenty thousand Russians. I fancy you are better satisfied with private than public war. The Lisbon packet in coming home met above forty of our privateers. Adieu. I hardly know whether I direct right to you, but I think Sheffield place the surest.

No. CVII.

DR WATSON (AFTERWARDS BISHOP OF LANDAFF)
TO MR GIBBON.

SIR, Cambridge, January 14th, 1779.

It will give me the greatest pleasure to have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with Mr Gibbon. I beg he would accept my sincere thanks for the too favourable manner in which he has spoken of a performance which derives its chief merit from the elegance and importance of the work it attempts to oppose. I have no hope of a future existence, except that which is grounded on the truth of Christianity. I wish not to be deprived of this hope; but I should be an apostate from the mild principle of the religion I profess, if I could be actuated with the least animosity against those who do not think with me upon this, of all others, the most important subject. I beg your pardon for this declaration of my belief; but my temper is naturally open, and it ought assuredly to be without disguise to a man whom I wish no longer to look upon as an antagonist, but as a friend. I have the honour to be, with every sentiment of respect, your obliged servant,

RICHARD WATSON.

No. CVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

February 6th, 1779.

You are quiet and peaceable, and do not bark, as usual, at my silence. To reward you, I would send you some news; but we are asleep; no foreign intelligence, except the capture of a frigate; no certain account from the West Indies; and a dissolution of parliament, which seems to have taken place since we parted. In the papers you will see negociations,

changes of departments, &c., and I have *some* reason to believe, that those reports are not entirely without foundation. Portsmouth is no longer an object of speculation; the whole stream of all men, and all parties, runs one way. Sir Hugh* is disgraced, ruined, &c. &c.; and as an old wound has broken out again, they say he must have his leg cut off as soon as he has time. In a night or two we shall be in a blaze of illumination, from the zeal of naval-heroes, land-patriots, and tallow-chandlers; the last are not the least sincere. I want to hear some details of your military and familiar proceedings. By your silence I suppose you admire Davis, and dislike my pamphlet; yet, such is the public folly, that we have a second edition in the press; the fashionable style of the clergy is to say they have not read it. If Maria does not take care, I shall write a much sharper invective against her, for *not* answering my diabolical book. My lady carried it down, with a solemn promise that I should receive an *unassisted* French letter. Yet I embrace the little animal as well as my lady, and the *Spes altera Romæ*. Adieu.

There is a buzz about a peace and Spanish mediation.

No. CIX.

DR WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

College of Edinburgh
March 10th, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I SHOULD have long since returned you thanks for the pamphlet you took the trouble of sending to me. I hope you are not one of those who estimate kindness by punctuality in correspondence. I read your little performance with much eagerness and some solicitude. The latter soon ceased. The tone you take with your

* Sir Hugh Paliser; perhaps no man was ever more cruelly used by the public, through a virulent party spirit. S.

adversary in this *impar congressus* appears to me perfectly proper; and, though I watched you with some attention, I have not observed any expression which I should, on your account, wish to be altered. Davis's book never reached us here. Our distance from the capital operates somewhat like time. Nothing but what has intrinsic value comes down to us. We hear sometimes of the worthless and vile things that float for a day on the stream, but we seldom see them. I am satisfied, however, that it was necessary for you to animadvert on a man who had brought accusations against you, which no gentleman can allow to be made without notice. I am persuaded that the persons who instigated the man to such an illiberal attack, will now be ashamed of him. At the same time I applaud your resolution of not degrading yourself by a second conflict with such antagonists.

I am ashamed to tell you how little I have done since I had the pleasure of seeing you. I have been prevented partly by ill-health, partly by causes which I shall explain when we meet: I hope that may be next spring. Believe me to be, with great truth,

Your affectionate and faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

No. CX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

May 1779.

ALAS! alas! fourteen ships of the line: you understand by this, that you have not got a single long-boat. Ministry are more crest-fallen than I ever knew them with the last intelligence; and I am sorry to say that I see a smile of triumph on some opposition faces. Though the business of the West Indies may still produce something, I am much afraid that we shall have a campaign of immense expense, and little or no action. The most busy scene is at present

in the House of Commons; and we shall be involved, during a great part of next month, in tedious, fruitless, but, in my opinion, proper inquiries. You see how difficult it would be for me to visit Brighton; and I fancy I must content myself with receiving you on your passage to Ireland. Indeed, I much want to have a *very serious* conversation with you. Another reason which must in a great measure pin me to Bentinck street, is the Decline and Fall. I have resolved to bring out the *suite* in the course of next year; and though I have been tolerably diligent, so much remains to be done, that I can hardly spare a single day from the shop. I can guess but one reason which should prevent you from supposing that the picture in Leicester Fields was intended for the Sheffield library; viz. my having told you some time ago that I was under a formal engagement to Mr Walpole.* Probably I should not have been in any great hurry to execute my promise, if Mr Cadell had not strenuously urged the curiosity of the public, who may be willing to repay the exorbitant price of *fifty* guineas. It is now finished, and my friends say that, in every sense of the word, it is a good head. Next week it will be given to Hall the engraver, and I promise you a first impression. Adieu. I embrace my lady and infants.

No. CXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

1779.

WHEN do you come to town? You gave me hopes of a visit, and I want to talk over things in general with you, before you march to the extremities of the west, where the sun goes to sleep in the sea. Mrs

* The portrait, one of the best of sir Joshua's, is at Sheffield place.

Trevor told me your destination was Exeter;* and I suppose nothing but truth can proceed from a pretty mouth. I have been, and am still, very diligent; and, though it is a huge beast, (the Roman empire,) yet, if I am not mistaken, I see it move a little. You seem surprised that I was able to get off Bath: very easily; the extreme shortness of our holidays was a fair excuse; her recovery of health, spirits, &c., made it less necessary; and she accepted my apology, which was however accompanied with an offer, if she chose it, in the prettiest manner possible. A load of business in this House (I write from it) will be the amusement of the spring: motions, inquiries, taxes, &c. &c. We are now engaged in lord Pigott's affair, brought on by a motion from the admiral, that the attorney-general should prosecute Mr Stratton and council; all the masters, Charles, Burke, Wedderburne, are of the same side, for it. The day is hot and dull; will be long: some curious evidence; one man who refused three lacks of rupees, (thirty-seven thousand five hundred pounds,) merely not to go to council; our mouths watered at such royal corruption; how pitiful is our insular bribery! A letter from aunt Hester. Adieu.

No. CXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

July 2nd, 1779.

THE inclosed will inform you of an event,† not the most disagreeable of those which I have lately experienced. I have only to add, that it was effected by the sincere friendship of the attorney-general. Accidents have happened, that I hardly know of news. You will learn that the Lords

Sussex militia, of which Mr Holroyd was
 lieutenant as a lord of trade.

have strangely castrated the new militia bill. The Ferrol squadron, eight or nine ships, have joined the French. The numbers stand on our side thirty-two, on theirs thirty-seven; but our force is at least equal, and the general consternation much dispelled. If you do not Hibernize, you might at least Bentineckize. I embrace, &c. Parliament will be prorogued tomorrow.

No. CXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM, Bentineck street, Sept. 17th, 1779.

I AM glad to hear of the very beneficial effects you have derived from your recent friendship with the goats;* and as I cannot discover in what respect this poor country is more prosperous or secure than it was last year, I must consider your present confidence as a proof that you view the prospect through a purer medium, and a glass of a more cheerful colour. I find myself so much more susceptible of private friendship than of public spirit, that I am very well satisfied with that conclusion. My summer has been passed in the town and neighbourhood, which I still maintain to be the best society and the best retirement: the latter, however, has been sometimes interrupted by the colonel of dragoons†, with a train of serjeants, trumpets, recruits, &c. &c. My own time is much and agreeably employed in the prosecution of my business. After doing much more than I expected to have done within the time, I find myself much less advanced than I expected: yet I begin to reckon, and, as well as I can calculate, I believe that

* At Abergavenny.

† On the appearance of the combined fleets of France and Spain on the coast of England, colonel Holroyd offered to raise a legion of hussars and light infantry. His offer was accepted as to the cavalry, and it was called the Sussex or 22nd regiment of Light Dragoons.

in twelve or fourteen months I shall be brought to bed, perhaps of twins; may they live and prove as healthy as their eldest brother! With regard to the little foundling which so many friends or enemies chose to lay at my door, I am perfectly innocent even of the knowledge of that production; and all the faults or merits of the 'History of Opposition' must, as I am informed, be imputed to Macpherson, the author or translator of Fingal. Dear madam, most truly yours.

No. CXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 8th, 1780.

As a member of parliament, I cannot be exposed to any danger,* since the House of Commons has adjourned to Monday se'nnight; as an individual, I do not conceive myself to be obnoxious. I am not apt, without duty or necessity, to thrust myself into a mob: and our part of the town is as quiet as a country village. So much for personal safety; but I cannot give the same assurances of public tranquillity: forty thousand puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell, have started out of their graves; the tumult has been dreadful; and even the remedy of military force and martial law is unpleasant. But government, with fifteen thousand regulars in town, and every gentleman (but one) on their side, must extinguish the flame. The execution of last night was severe; perhaps it must be repeated to-night: yet, upon the whole, the tumult subsides. Colonel Holroyd was all last night in Holborn among the flames, with the Northumberland militia, and performed very bold and able service. I will write again in a post or two. I am, dear madam, ever yours.

* Alluding to the disturbances occasioned by lord George Gordon.

No. CXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR MADAM, Bentinck street, June 27th, 1730.

I BELIEVE we may now rejoice in our common security. All tumult has perfectly subsided, and we only think of the justice which must be properly and severely inflicted on such flagitious criminals. The measures of government have been seasonable and vigorous; and even opposition have been forced to confess, that the military power was applied and regulated with the utmost propriety. Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June 1780 will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism, which I had supposed to be extinct, but which actually subsists in Great Britain perhaps beyond any other country in Europe. Our parliamentary work draws to a conclusion; and I am much more pleasingly, though laboriously, engaged in revising and correcting for the press the continuation of my History, two volumes of which will certainly appear next winter. This business fixes me to Bentinck street more closely than any other part of my literary labour; as it is absolutely necessary that I should be in the midst of all the books which I have at any time used during the composition. But I feel a strong desire (irritated, like all other passions, by repeated obstacles) to escape to Bath. Dear madam, most truly yours.

No. CXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO COLONEL HOLROYD.

July 25th, 1780.

As your motions are spontaneous, and the stations of the Lord Chief* unalterably fixed, I cannot perceive

* Lord Mansfield

the necessity of your sending or receiving intelligence. However, your commands are obeyed. You wish I would write, as a sign of life. I am alive; but as I am immersed in the Decline and Fall, I shall only make the sign. It is made. You may suppose that we are not pleased with the junction of the fleets; nor can an ounce of West India loss be compensated by a pound of East India success: but the circuit will roll down all the news and politics of London. I rejoice to hear that the Sussex regiment of dragoons are such well-disciplined cannibals; but I want to know when the Chief cannibal will return to his den. It would suit me better that it should happen soon. Adieu.

No. CXVII.

MR GIBBON TO MRS HOLROYD AT SHEFFIELD
PLACE.

Bentinck street, Aug. 21st, 1780.

THE colonel left town about seven o'clock. Could he have held a pen with each finger and each toe at the same time, he would have found employment for them all. He therefore named me his secretary to signify to Sheffield place his health, duty, impatience, &c.

The Intrigue du Cabinet shall not be neglected. But the Intrigue du Parlement is now the universal pursuit. It will be dissolved tomorrow, the writs will be out Saturday night, and a few days will terminate the business. You probably received my *last* frank. I have *found* reason to believe that I shall never rise again, and I submit to my fate with philosophic composure. If any parcels or letters directed to me should arrive at Sheffield, you will be so good as to return them by the coach. Adieu. E. G.

No. CXVII.

MR GIBBON TO MRS HOLROYD, SHEFFIELD PLACE,
ANNOUNCING THAT MR HOLROYD WAS CREATED
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Bentinck street, Nov. 27th, 1780.

MR GIBBON presents his respectful compliments to lady Sheffield, and hopes her ladyship is in perfect health, as well as the hon. Miss Holroyd, and the hon. Miss Louisa Holroyd. Mr Gibbon has not had the honour of hearing from lord Sheffield since his lordship reached Coventry, but supposes that the election begins this day.

Be honest. How does this read? Do you not feel some titillations of vanity? Yet I will do you the justice to believe that they are as faint as can find place in a female (you will retort, or a male) heart, on such an auspicious event. When it is revealed to the hon. Miss, I should recommend the loss of some ounces of noble blood. You may expect every post a formal notification, which I shall instantly dispatch. The birds, as well as I now recollect their taste, were excellent. I hope the *Voyages* still amuse. I had almost forgot to say that my seat in parliament is deferred. Stronger and more impatient rivals have stepped before me, and I can wait, with cheerful resignation, till another opportunity. I wish the baron's situation was as placid as mine.* No news. We are very dull. Adieu. I shall go to Bath about the 15th of next month. But—silence.

* Lord Sheffield was at that time engaged in a violently contested election for Coventry.

CXIX.

MR GIBBON TO MRS GIBBON, BELVEDERE, BATH
 DEAR MADAM, Bentinck street, Feb. 24th, 1781.

As you have probably received my last letter of thirteen hundred pages,* I shall be very concise; read, judge, pronounce; and believe that I sincerely agree with my friend Julian, in esteeming the praise of those only who will freely censure my defects. Next Thursday I shall be delivered to the world, for whose inconstant and malicious levity I am coolly but firmly prepared. Excuse me to Sarah.† I see more clearly than ever the absolute necessity of confining my presents to my own family; *that*, and that only, is a determined line, and lord Sheffield is the first to approve his exclusion. He has a strong assurance of success, and some hopes of a speedy decision. How suddenly your friend general Pierson disappeared! You thought him happy. What is happiness! My dear madam, ever yours.

No. CXX.

DR WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, May 12th, 1781.

I AM ashamed of having deferred so long to thank you for the agreeable present of your two new volumes; but just as I had finished the first reading of them, I was taken ill, and continued, for two or three weeks, nervous, deaf, and languid. I have now recovered as much spirit as to tell you with what perfect satisfaction I have not only perused, but studied, this part of your work. I knew enough of your talents and industry to expect a great deal, but you have gone far beyond my expectations. I can

* Second and third volumes of the Decline and Fall.

† Mrs Holroyd of Bath.

recollect no historical work from which I ever received so much instruction ; and when I consider in what a barren field you had to glean and pick up materials, I am truly astonished at the connected and interesting story you have formed. I like the style of these volumes better than that of the first ; there is the same beauty, richness, and perspicuity of language, with less of that quaintness into which your admiration of Tacitus sometimes seduced you. I am highly pleased with the reign of Julian. I was a little afraid that *you* might lean with some partiality towards him ; but even bigots, I should think, must allow, that you have delineated his most singular character with a more masterly hand than ever touched it before. You set me a reading his works, with which I was very slenderly acquainted ; and I am much struck with the felicity wherewith you have described that odd infusion of heathen fanaticism and philosophical coxcombry, which mingled with the great qualities of a hero and a genius. Your chapter concerning the pastoral nations is admirable ; and, though I hold myself to be a tolerably good general historian, a great part of it was new to me. As soon as I have leisure, I purpose to trace you to your sources of information ; and I have no doubt of finding you as exact there as I have found you in other passages where I have made a scrutiny. It was always my idea that an historian should feel himself a witness giving evidence upon oath. I am glad to perceive, by your minute scrupulosity, that your notions are the same. The last chapter in your work is the only one with which I am not entirely satisfied. I imagine you rather anticipate, in describing the jurisprudence and institutions of the Franks ; and should think that the account of private war, ordeals, chivalry, &c. would have come in more in its place about the age of Charlemagne, or later : but with respect to this, and some other petty criticisms, I will have an opportunity of talking fully to you soon, as

I propose setting out for London on Monday. I have indeed many things to say to you ; and, as my stay in London is to be very short, I shall hope to find your door (at which I will be very often) always open to me. I cannot conclude without approving of the caution with which the new volumes are written ; I hope it will exempt you from the illiberal abuse the first volume drew upon you. I ever am yours faithfully and affectionately,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

No. CXXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO LADY SHEFFIELD AT
SHEFFIELD PLACE.

Bentinck street, Friday Evening, 10 o'clock, 1781.

Oh, oh ! I have given you the slip ; saved thirty miles by proceeding this day directly from Eartham to town, and am now *comfortably* seated in my library, in *my own* easy chair, and before *my own* fire ; a style which you understand, though it is unintelligible to your lord. The town is empty ; but I am surrounded with a thousand old acquaintance of all ages and characters, who are ready to answer a thousand questions which I am impatient to ask. I shall not easily be tired of their company ; yet I still remember, and will honourably execute, my promise of visiting you at Brighton about the middle of next month. I have seen nobody, nor learned anything, in four hours of a town life ; but I can inform you, that lady * * * * is now the declared mistress of prince Henry of Prussia, whom she encountered at Spa ; and that the emperor has invited the amiable couple to pass the winter at Vienna ;—fine encouragement for married women who behave themselves properly ! I spent a very pleasant day in the little paradise of Eartham, and the hermit expressed a desire (no vulgar compliment) to see and to know lord S. Adieu. I cordially embrace, &c.

No. CXXII.

SIR WILLIAM JONES TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Lamb's buildings, June 30th, 1781.

I HAVE more than once sought, without having been so fortunate as to obtain, a proper opportunity of thanking you very sincerely for the elegant compliment which you pay me in a work abounding in elegance of all kinds.

My *Seven Arabian Poets* will see the light before next winter, and be proud to wait upon you in their English dress. Their wild productions will, I flatter myself, be thought interesting, and not venerable merely on account of their antiquity.

In the meanwhile, let me request you to honour me with accepting a copy of a Law Tract, which is not yet published: the subject is so generally important that I make no apology for sending you a professional work.

You must pardon my inveterate hatred of C. Octavianus, basely surnamed Augustus. I feel myself unable to forgive the death of Cicero, which, if he did not promote, he might have prevented. Besides, even Mæcenas knew the cruelty of his disposition, and ventured to reproach him with it. In short, I have not *Christian* charity for him.

With regard to Asiatic letters, a necessary attention to my profession will compel me wholly and eternally to abandon them, *unless* lord North (to whom I am already under no small obligation) should think me worthy to concur in the *improved* administration of justice in Bengal, and should appoint me to supply the vacancy on the India bench. Were that appointment to take place this year, I should probably travel, for speed, through part of Egypt and Arabia, and should be able, in my way, to procure many eastern tracts of literature and jurisprudence. I might bo-

come a good *Mahomedan* lawyer before I reached Calcutta, and, in my vacations, should find leisure to explain, in my native language, whatever the Arabs, Persians, and Turks, have written on science, history, and the fine arts.

My happiness by no means depends on obtaining this appointment, as I am in easy circumstances without my profession, and have flattering prospects in it; but if the present summer and the ensuing autumn elapse without my receiving any answer, favourable or unfavourable, I shall be forced to consider that silence as a polite refusal, and having given sincere thanks for past favours, shall entirely drop all thoughts of *Asia*, and, "deep as ever plummet sounded, shall drown my *Persian* books." If my politics have given offence, it would be manly in ministers to tell me so. I shall never be *personally* hostile to them, nor enlist under party banners of any colour; but I will never resign my opinions for *interest*, though I would cheerfully abandon them on *conviction*. My reason, such as it is, can only be controlled by better reason, to which I am ever open. As to my freedom of thought, speech, and action, I shall ever say what Charles XII wrote under the map of Riga, "*Dieu me l'a donnée; le diable ne me l'ôtera pas.*" But the fair answer to this objection is, that my system is purely speculative, and has no relation to my seat on the bench in India, where I should hardly think of instructing the *Gentoos* in the maxims of the Athenians. I believe I should not have troubled you with this letter, if I did not fear that your attendance in parliament might deprive me of the pleasure of meeting you at the club next Tuesday; and I shall go to Oxford a few days after. At all times, and in all places, I shall ever be, with undissembled regard, dear sir, your much obliged and faithful servant,

W. JONES

No. CXXIII.

LORD HARDWICKE TO MR GIBBON.

SIR, Wimple, September 20th, 1781.

As I have perused your History of the Decline, &c. with the greatest pleasure and instruction, I cannot help wishing that, as health and leisure permit, you would gratify your numerous readers and admirers by continuing it, at least, till the irruption of the Arabs after Mahomet. From that period the History of the East is not very interesting, and often disgusting. I particularly wish to see the reigns of Justin, Justinian, and I think Justin the Second, written by so masterly a hand. There are striking facts and remarkable characters in all those reigns, which have not yet met with an able and sagacious *Historian*. You seemed (as well as I recollect) to think the anecdotes of Procopius spurious: there are strange anecdotes in them, and of a very different cast from his History. Can it be traced up when they first came to light?

Excuse this short interruption from much better employments or amusements; and believe me, sir, with the greatest regard, your most obedient humble servant,

HARDWICKE.

P.S. It has occurred to me, that a map of the progress and native seat of the northern hives would greatly elucidate and explain that part of your History. It may be done in a second edition.

No. CXXIV.

DR ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, Nov. 6th, 1781.

Soon after my return, I had a long conversation with our friend Mr Smith, in which I stated to him

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every particular you mentioned to me with respect to the propriety of going on with your great work. I was happy to find that his opinion coincided perfectly with that which I had ventured to give you. His decisions, you know, are both prompt and vigorous: and he would not allow that you ought to hesitate a moment in your choice. He promised to write his sentiments to you very fully. But as he may have neglected to do this, for it is not willingly he puts pen to paper, I thought it might be agreeable to you to know his opinion, though I imagine you could hardly entertain any doubt concerning it. I hope you have brought such a stock of health and spirits from Brighthelmstone, that you are set seriously at your desk, and that in two winters or so you will display the crescent of Mahomet on the dome of St Sophia. I met t'other day, in a work addressed to yourself, a sensible passage from F. Paul, which perfectly removes one of your chief difficulties, as to the barrenness of some parts of your period. Hayley's 'Essay on History,' p. 133. By the bye, who is this Mr Hayley? His poetry has more merit than that of most of his contemporaries; but his Whiggism is so bigotted, and his Christianity so fierce, that he almosts disgusts one with two very good things.

I have got quite well long ago, and am perfectly free from deafness; but I cannot yet place myself in any class but that of the *multa et præclara minantes*. Be so kind as to remember me to lord Loughborough and Mr Craufurd, and believe me to be, with most sincere respect and attachment, yours very faithfully,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

No. CXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

Brighthelmstone, Nov. 2d, 1781.

I RETURNED to this place with lord and lady Sheffield, with the design of passing two or three weeks in a situation which had so highly delighted me. But how vain are all sublunary hopes ! I had forgot that there is some difference between the sunshine of August and the cold fogs (though we have uncommon good weather) of November. Instead of my beautiful sea-shore, I am confined to a dark lodging in the middle of the town ; for the place is still full, and our time is now spent in the dull imitation of a London life. To complete my misfortunes, lord Sheffield was hastily ordered to Canterbury and Deal, to suppress some disturbances ; and I was left almost alone with my lady, in the servile state of a married man. But he returns to-day, and I hope to be seated in my own library by the middle of next week. However, you will not be sorry to hear that I have refreshed myself by a very *idle* summer, and indeed a much idler and more pleasant winter than the House of Commons will ever allow me to enjoy again. I had almost forgot Mr Hayley ; ungratefully enough, since I really passed a very simple but entertaining day with him. His place, though small, is elegant as his mind, which I value much more highly. Mrs * * * * wrote a melancholy story of an American mother, a friend of her friend, who in a short time had lost three sons ; one killed by the savages, one run mad from the fright at that accident, and the third taken at sea, now in England, a prisoner in Forton hospital. For *him* something might perhaps be done. Your humanity will prompt you to obtain from Mrs * * * * a more accurate account of names, dates, and circumstances ; but you will prudently suppress my

request, lest I should raise hopes which it may not be in my power to gratify. Lady Sheffield begs to send her kindest compliments to you. I am, dear madam, ever yours.

No. CXXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR MADAM,

July 3d, 1782.

I HOPE you have not had a moment's uneasiness about the delay of my Midsummer letter. Whatever may happen, you may rest fully secure that the materials of it shall always be *found*. But on this occasion I have missed four or five posts; postponing, as usual, from morning to the evening bell, which now rings, till it has occurred to me that it might not be amiss to inclose the two essential lines, if I only added that the influenza has been known to me only by the report of others. Lord Rockingham is at last dead; a good man, whatever he might be a minister: his successor is not yet named, and divisions in the cabinet are suspected. If lord Shelburne should be the man, as I think he will, the friends of his predecessor will quarrel with him before Christmas. At all events, I foresee much tumult and strong opposition, from which I should be very glad to extricate myself by quitting the House of Commons with honour. Whatever you may hear, I believe there is not the least intention of dissolving Parliament, which would indeed be a rash and dangerous measure. I hope you like Mr Hayley's poem; he rises with his subject, and, since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers. Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that she was in plain prose everything that he speaks her in verse. This summer I shall stay in town, and work at my trade, till I make some holidays for my

Bath excursion. Lady Sheffield is at Brighton, and he is under tents, like the wild Arabs; so that my country-house is shut up. I am, dear madam, ever yours

No. CXXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD SHEFFIELD, CAMP, COXHEATH.

Bentinck street, 1782.

I SYMPATHISE with your fatigues; yet Alexander, Hannibal, &c. have suffered hardships almost equal to yours. At such a moment it is disagreeable (besides laziness) to write, because every hour teems with a new lie. As yet, however, only Charles has formally resigned; but lord John,* Burke, Keppel, lord Althorpe, &c. certainly follow; your lord lieutenant† stays. In short, three months of prosperity have dissolved a phalanx which had stood ten years adversity. Next Tuesday Fox will give his reasons, and possibly be encountered by Pitt, the new secretary, or chancellor,‡ at three-and-twenty. The day will be rare and curious, and, if I were a light dragoon, I would take a gallop on purpose to Westminster. Adieu. I hear the bell. How could I write before I knew where you dwelt?

No. CXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

September 29th, 1782.

I SHOULD like to hear sometimes whether you survive the scenes of action and danger in which a dragoon is continually involved. What a difference

* Lord John Cavendish.

† The duke of Richmond.

‡ Chancellor of the Exchequer.

between the life of a dragoon and that of a philosopher! And I will freely own that I (the philosopher, am much better satisfied with my own independent and tranquil situation, in which I have always something to do, without ever being obliged to do anything. The Hampton Court villa has answered my expectation, and proved no small addition to my comforts; so that I am resolved next summer to hire, borrow, or steal, either the same, or something of the same kind. Every morning I walk a mile or more before breakfast, read and write *quantum sufficit*, mount my chaise and visit in the neighbourhood, accept some invitations, and escape others, use the Lucans as my daily bread, dine pleasantly at home, or sociably abroad, reserve for study an hour or two in the evening, lie in town regularly once a week, &c. &c. &c. I have announced to Mrs Gibbon my new arrangements, the certainty that October will be fine, and my increasing doubts whether I shall be able to reach Bath before Christmas. Do you intend (but how can you intend anything?) to pass the winter under canvass? Perhaps under the veil of Hampton Court I may lurk ten days or a fortnight at Sheffield, if the enraged lady does not shut the doors against me. The warden* passed through on his way to Dover. He is not so fat, and more cheerful than ever. I had not any private conversation with him; but he clearly holds the balance, unless he lets it drop out of his hand. The Pandæmonium (as I understand) does not meet till the twenty-sixth of November. Town is more a desert than I ever knew it. I arrived yesterday, dined at sir Joshua's with a tolerable party; the chaise is now at the door; I dine at Richmond, lie at Hampton, &c. Adieu.

Lord North.

No. CXXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bentinck street, October 14th, 1782.

ON the approach of winter, my paper house at Hampton becomes less comfortable; my visits to Bentinck street grow longer and more frequent, and the end of next week will restore me to the town, with a lively wish, however, to repeat the same, or a similar experiment, next summer. I admire the assurance with which you propose a month's residence at Sheffield, when you are not sure of being allowed three days. Here it is currently reported, that camps will not separate till lord Howe's *return* from Gibraltar, and as yet we have no news of his arrival. Perhaps, indeed, you may have more intimate correspondence with your old friend lord Shelburne, and already know the hour of your deliverance. I should like to be informed. As lady Sheffield has entirely forgotten me, I shall have the pleasure of forming a new acquaintance. I have often thought of writing, but it is now too late to repent.

I am at a loss what to say or think about our parliamentary state. A certain late secretary of Ireland reckons the House of Commons thus: minister one hundred and forty, lord North one hundred and twenty, Fox ninety, the rest unknown or uncertain. The second, by self or agents, talks too much of absence, neutrality, moderation. I still think he will discard the game.

I am not in such a fury with the letter of American independence, but I think it seems ill-timed and useless; and I am much entertained with the metaphysical disputes between government and secession about the meaning of it. Lord Loughborough will be in town Sunday seven-night. I long to see him

and Co. I think he will take a very decided part. If he could throw aside his gown, he would make a noble leader. The East India news are excellent. The French gone to the Mauritius, Hyder desirous of peace, the Nizam and Mahrattas our friends, and seventy lacks of rupees in the Bengal treasury, while we were voting the recall of Hastings. Adieu. Write soon.

No. CXXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

1782.

I HAVE designed writing every post. The air of London is admirable ; my complaints have vanished, and the gout still respects me. Lord Loughborough, with whom I passed an entire day, is very well satisfied with his Irish expedition, and found the barbarous people very kind to him. The castle is strong, but the volunteers are formidable. London is dead, and all intelligence so totally extinct, that the loss of an army would be a favourable incident. We have not even the advantage of shipwrecks, which must soon, with the society of you and Gerard Hamilton, become the only pleasures of Brighton. My lady is precious, and deserves to shine in London, when she regains her palace. The workmen are slow, but I hear that the minister talks of hiring another house after Christmas.* Adieu till Monday seven-night.

* Lord North, while his house was repairing, inhabited lord Sheffield's in Downing street.

No. CXXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

January 17th, 1783.

As I arrived about seven o'clock on Wednesday last, we were some time in town in mutual ignorance. Unlucky enough; yet our loss will be speedily repaired. Your reason for not writing is worthy of an Irish baron: you thought Sarah might be at Bath, because you directed letters to her at Clifton, near Bristol; where indeed I saw her in a delightful situation, swept by the winter winds, and scorched by the summer sun. A nobler reason for your silence would be the care of the public papers to record your steps, words, and actions. I was pleased with your Coventry oration: a panegyric on **** is a subject entirely new, and which no orator before yourself would have dared to undertake. You have acted with prudence and dignity in casting away the military yoke. This next summer you will sit down (if you can sit) in the long-lost character of a country gentleman.

For my own part, my late journey has only confirmed me in the opinion, that number seven in Bentinck street is the best house in the world. I find that peace and war alternately, and daily, take their turns of conversation, and this (Friday) is the pacific day. Next week we shall probably hear some questions on that head very strongly asked, and very foolishly answered, &c. Give me a line by return of post, and probably I may visit Downing street on Monday evening: late however, as I am engaged to dinner and cards. Adieu.

No. CXXXII.

[Although Dr Priestley may not be justified for publishing the following letters, yet as he thought fit to print them with a volume of sermons soon after Mr Gibbon's death, it will not be improper to insert them in this collection. S.]

MR GIBBON TO DR PRIESTLEY.

SIR,

January 23d, 1783.

As a mark of your esteem, I should have accepted with pleasure your History of the Corruptions of Christianity. You have been careful to inform me that it is intended, not as a gift, but as a challenge—and such a challenge you must permit me to decline. At the same time you glory in outstripping the zeal of the Mufti and the Lama, it may be proper to declare, that I should equally refuse the defiance of those venerable divines. Once, and once only, the just defence of my own veracity provoked me to descend into the amphitheatre; but as long as you attack opinions which I have never maintained, or maintain principles which I have never denied, you may safely exult in my silence and your own victory. The difference between us—on the credibility of miracles—which you choose to suppose, and wish to argue, is a trite and ancient topic of controversy; and, from the opinion which you entertain of yourself and of me, it does not appear probable that our dispute would either edify or enlighten the public.

That public will decide to whom the *invidious* name of unbeliever more justly belongs; to the historian who, without interposing his own sentiments, has delivered a simple narrative of authentic facts; or to the disputant who proudly rejects all natural proofs of the immortality of the soul,—overthrows (by circumscribing) the inspiration of the evangelists and

apostles,—and condemns the religion of every Christian nation as a fable less innocent, but not less absurd, than Mahomet's journey to the third heaven.

And now, sir, since you assume a right to determine the objects of my past and future studies, give me leave to convey to your ear the almost unanimous, and not offensive, wish of the philosophic world:—that you would confine your talents and industry to those sciences in which real and useful improvements *can* be made. Remember the end of your predecessor Servetus, not of his life—the Calvins of our days are restrained from the use of the same fiery arguments—but, I mean, the end of his reputation. His theological writings are lost in oblivion; and if his book on the Trinity be still preserved, it is only because it contains the first rudiments of the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

I am, sir, your obedient humble servant.

No. CXXXIII.

DR PRIESTLEY TO MR GIBBON.

SIR,

Birmingham, 3rd February 1783.

It would have been impertinent in me, especially considering the object of my *History*, to have sent you a copy of it as a mark of my *esteem* or *friendship*. What I meant was to act the part of a fair and open *adversary*, and I am truly sorry that you decline the discussion I proposed: for though you are of a different opinion, I do not think that either of us could be better employed; and should the Mufti and Lama, whose challenge you say you would also decline, become parties in the business, I should rejoice the more. I do not well know what you can mean by intimating that I am a greater unbeliever than yourself; that I attack opinions which you never maintained, and maintain principles which you never denied. If you mean to assert that you are a believer

in Christianity, and meant to recommend it, I must say, that your mode of writing has been very ill adapted to gain your purpose. If there be any certain method of discovering a man's real object, yours has been to discredit Christianity in fact, while in words you represent yourself as a friend to it: a conduct which I scruple not to call highly unworthy and mean; an insult on the common sense of the Christian world. As a method of screening you from the notice of the law, (which is as hostile to me as it is to you,) you must know that it could avail you nothing; and, though that mode of writing might be deemed ingenious and witty in the first inventor of it, it has been too often repeated to deserve that appellation now.

According to your own rule of conduct, this charge ought to provoke you to descend into the amphitheatre once more, as much as the accusation of Mr Davis: for it is a call upon you to defend, not your *principles* only, but also your *honour*. For what can reflect greater dishonour on a man than to say one thing and mean another? You have certainly been very far from confining yourself, as you pretend, to a simple narrative of authentic facts, without interposing your own sentiments. I hold no opinions, obnoxious as they are, that I am not both ready to *avow* in the most explicit manner, and also to defend with any person of competent judgment and ability. Had I not considered you in this light, and also as fairly open, by the strain of your writings, to such a challenge, I should not have called upon you as I have done. The public will form its own judgment both of that and of your silence upon the occasion: and finally decide between you, the *humble historian*, and me, the *proud disputant*.

As to my *reputation*, for which you are so very obligingly concerned, give me leave to observe that, as far as it is an object with any person, and a thing to be enjoyed by himself, it must depend upon his particular notions and feelings.—Now, odd as it will

appear to you, the esteem of a very few rational Christian friends (though I know that it will ensure me the detestation of the greater part of the present nominally Christian world that happen to hear me) gives me more real satisfaction than the applause of what you call the philosophic world. I admire Servetus, by whose example you wish me to take warning, more for his courage in dying for the cause of important truth, than I should have done if, besides the certain discovery of the circulation of the blood, he had made any other the most celebrated discovery in philosophy.

However, I do not see what my philosophical friends (of whom I have many, and whom I think I value as I ought) have to do with my metaphysical or theological writings. They may, if they please, consider them as my particular whims or amusements, and accordingly neglect them. They have, in fact, interfered very little with my application to philosophy, since I have had the means of doing it. I was never more busy, or more successfully so, in my philosophical pursuits, than during the time that I have been employed about the History of the Corruptions of Christianity. I am at this very time *totus in illis*, as my friends know, and as the public will know in due time, which with me is never long; and if you had thought proper to enter into the discussion I proposed, it would not have made me neglect my laboratory, or omit a single experiment that I should otherwise have made.

I am, sir, your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

No. CXXXIV.

MR GIBBON TO DR PRIESTLEY.

SIR,

Bentinck street, Feb. 6th, 1783.

As I do not pretend to judge of the sentiments or intentions of another, I shall not inquire how far you

are inclined to suffer or inflict martyrdom. It only becomes me to say, that the style and temper of your last letter have satisfied me of the propriety of declining all further correspondence, whether public or private, with such an adversary.

I am, sir, your humble servant.

No. CXXXV.

DR PRIESTLEY TO MR GIBBON.

SIR,

Birmingham, Feb. 10th, 1783.

I NEITHER requested nor wished to have any *private correspondence* with you. All that my MS. card required was a simple acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy of my work. You chose, however, to give me a specimen of your temper and feelings; and also what I thought to be an opening to a further call upon you for a justification of yourself *in public*. Of this I was willing to take advantage; and, at the same time, to satisfy you that my philosophical pursuits, for which, whether in earnest or not, you were pleased to express some concern, would not be interrupted in consequence of it.

As this correspondence, from the origin and nature of it, cannot be deemed *confidential*, I may, especially if I resume my observations on your conduct as an historian, give the public an opportunity of judging of the propriety of my answer to your first extraordinary letter, and also to this last truly *enigmatical* one; to interpret which requires much more sagacity than to discover your real intentions with respect to Christianity, though you might think you had carefully concealed them from all human inspection.

Wishing to hear from you just as little as you please in private, and just as much as you please in public, I am, sir, your humble servant.

No. CXXXVI.

MR GIBBON TO DR PRIESTLEY.

February 22nd, 1783.

IF Dr Priestley consults his friends, he will probably learn that a single copy of a paper, addressed under a seal to a single person, and not relative to any public or official business, must always be considered as *private* correspondence, which a man of honour is not at liberty to print without the consent of the writer. That consent in the present instance Mr Gibbon thinks proper to withhold; and, as he desires to escape all further altercation, he shall not trouble Dr Priestley or himself with explaining the motives of his refusal.

No. CXXXVII.

DR PRIESTLEY TO MR GIBBON.

Birmingham, February 25th, 1783.

DR PRIESTLEY is as unwilling to be guilty of any real impropriety as Mr Gibbon can wish him to be; but, as the correspondence between them relates not to any *private*, but only to a *public matter*, he apprehends that it may, according to Mr Gibbon's own distinction, at the pleasure of either of the parties, be laid before the public; who, in fact, are interested to know at least the result of it. Dr Priestley's conduct will always be open to animadversion—that of Mr Gibbon, or of any other person. His appeal is to men of honour, and even men of the world; and he desires no favour.

Dr Priestley has sent a single copy of the correspondence to a friend in London, with leave to shew it to any other common friends, but with a prohibition to take any other copy: but between this and *printing* there is no difference, except in *mode* and *extent*. In the eye of the law and of reason both are

equally publications; and has Mr Gibbon never thought himself at liberty to shew a copy of a letter to a third person?

Mr Gibbon may easily escape all further altercation by discontinuing this mutually disagreeable correspondence, by leaving Dr Priestley to act as his own discretion or indiscretion may dictate; and for this himself only, and not Mr Gibbon, is responsible.

No. CXXXVIII.

MR GIBBON TO LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

WITHOUT presuming to inquire into the state of public measures, which must be secret in order to be successful, I cannot but observe and congratulate, with the rest of my countrymen, the fair prospect of peace, or at least of negociation, which seems to be opening upon us.

I find it generally understood that the principal conduct of this important event will be entrusted to a minister whose eminent abilities have been long tried and distinguished. But a scene of business so various and extensive must afford several collateral and subordinate lines of negociation. If in any of these I should be thought qualified for public trust, I am ready to devote my time and my best industry to the service of my country, and shall think myself happy if I can discharge, in any degree, my debt of gratitude to his majesty's government.

Your lordship's experience of mankind has undoubtedly taught you to distrust and dislike ostentatious professions; yet I may affirm with the confidence of truth that, if I consulted only my private interest and inclination, I should not be lightly tempted to interrupt the tranquillity and leisure which I now enjoy, and in which I am never busy and never idle.

The grateful recollection of your lordship's indulgence on a former occasion has strongly solicited me to make this offer of my services. I should deem it no vulgar honour if they could ever deserve the approbation of a wise and intrepid statesman, who, in a divided country, has commanded the esteem and applause of the most hostile parties.

I am, with great respect, my lord, &c.

E. GIBBON.

The Lord Chancellor.

No. CXXXIX.

LORD THURLOW TO MR GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

I SHALL certainly avail myself of your permission, not to tender your services to the minister, but, whenever an occasion sufficiently considerable shall offer, to suggest a name which possesses so many titles to the public confidence. And in that strange and distant scene (of foreign politics) it is almost the only suggestion I can make with perfect confidence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

THURLOW.

No. CXL

M. GIBBON A M. DEYVERDUN, A LAUSANNE.

A Londres, ce 20 Mai 1783.

QUE j'aime la douce et parfaite confiance de nos sentimens réciproques! Nous nous aimons dans l'éloignement et le silence, et il nous suffit à l'un et à l'autre, de savoir de tems en tems des nouvelles de la santé et du bonheur de son ami. Aujourd'hui j'ai besoin de vous écrire; je commence sans excuses et sans reproches, comme si nous allions reprendre la conversation familière du jour précédent. Si je proposois de faire un *compte rendu* de mes études, de mes occupations, de mes plaisirs, de mes nouvelles liaisons,

de ma politique toujours muette, mais un peu plus rapprochée des grands événemens, je multiplierois mes *in quarto* et je ne sais pas encore votre avis sur ceux que je vous ai déjà envoyés. Dans cette histoire moderne, il seroit toujours question de la décadence des empires; et autant que j'en puis juger sur mes réminiscences et sur le rapport de l'ami Bugnon, vous aimez aussi peu la puissance de l'Angleterre que celle des Romains. Notre chute, cependant, a été plus douce. Après une guerre sans succès, et une paix assez peu glorieuse, il nous reste de quoi vivre contents et heureux; et lorsque je me suis dépouillé du rôle de membre du parlement, pour redevenir homme, philosophe, et historien, nous pourrions bien nous trouver d'accord sur la plupart des scènes étonnantes qui viennent de se passer devant nos yeux, et qui fourniront une riche matière aux plus habiles de mes successeurs.

Bornons nous à cette heure à un objet moins illustre sans doute, mais plus intéressant pour tous les deux, et c'est beaucoup que le même objet puisse intéresser deux mortels qui ne se sont pas vus, qui à peine se sont écrit depuis—oui, ma foi—depuis huit ans. Ma plume, très paresseuse au commencement, ou plutôt avant le commencement, marche assez vite, lorsqu'elle s'est une fois mise en train; mais une raison qui m'empêcheroit de lui donner carrière, c'est l'espérance de pouvoir bientôt me servir avec vous d'un instrument encore plus commode, la langue. Que l'homme, l'homme anglois, l'homme Gibbon, est un sot animal! Je l'espère, je le désire, je le puis; mais je ne sais pas si je le veux, encore moins si j'exécuterai cette volonté. Voici mon histoire, autant qu'elle pourra vous éclairer, qu'elle pourra m'éclairer moi-même, sur mes véritables intentions, qui me paroissent très obscures, et très équivoques; et vous aurez la bonté de m'apprendre quelle sera ma conduite future. Il vous souvient, seigneur, que mon grandpère a fait sa fortune, que mon père l'a

mangée avec un peu trop d'appetit, et que je jouis actuellement du fruit, ou plutôt du reste de leurs travaux. Vous n'avez pas oublié que je suis entré au parlement sans patriotisme, sans ambition, et que toutes mes vues se bornoient à la place commode et honnête d'un *Lord of Trade*. Cette place, je l'ai obtenue enfin ; je l'ai possédée trois ans, depuis 1779 jusqu' à 1782, et le produit net, qui se montoit à sept cents cinquante livres sterling, augmentoit mon revenu au niveau de mes besoins et de mes désirs. Mais au printemps de l'année précédente, l'orage a grondé sur nos têtes : milord North a été renversé, votre serviteur chassé, et le *Board* même, dont j'étois membre, aboli et cassé pour toujours, par la réformation de M. Burke, avec beaucoup d'autres places de l'Etat, et de la maison du Roi. Pour mon malheur, je suis toujours resté membre de la chambre basse : à la fin du dernier parlement (en 1780) M. Eliot a retiré sa nomination ; mais la faveur de milord North a facilité ma rentrée, et la reconnoissance m'imposoit le devoir de faire valoir, pour son service, les droits que je tenois en partie de lui. Cet hiver nous avons combattu sous les étendards réunis (vous savez notre histoire) de milord North et de M. Fox ; nous avons triomphé de milord Shelburne et de la paix. Avec beaucoup d'esprit, et des qualités très respectables, milord North n'a plus ni le titre, ni le crédit, de premier ministre ; des collègues plus actifs lui enlèvent les morceaux les plus friands, qui sont aussitôt dévorés par la voracité de leurs créatures ; nos malheurs et nos réformes ont diminué le nombre des graces ; par orgueil ou par paresse, je sollicite aussi mal ; et si je parviens enfin, ce sera peut-être à la veille d'une nouvelle révolution, qui me fera perdre dans un instant ce qui m'aura coûté tant de soins et de recherches. Si je ne consultois que mon cœur et ma raison, je romperois sur le champ cette indigne chaîne de la dépendance ; je quitterois le parlement, Londres, l'Angleterre ; je chercherois sous un ciel plus doux,

dans un pays plus tranquille, le repos, la liberté, l'aisance, et une société éclairée et aimable. Je coulerois quelques années de ma vie sans espérance, et sans crante; j'acheverois mon histoire; et je ne rentrerois dans ma patrie qu'en homme libre, riche, et respectable par sa position, aussi bien que par son caractère. Mes amis, et surtout milord Sheffield, ne veulent pas me permettre d'être heureux suivant mon goût et mes lumières. Leur prudence exige que je fasse tous mes efforts pour obtenir un emploi très sûr à la vérité, qui me donneroit mille guinées de rente, mais qui m'enleveroit cinq jours par semaine. Je me prête à leur zèle, et je leur ai promis de ne partir qu'en automne, après avoir consacré l'été à cette dernière tentative. Le succès, cependant, est très incertain, et je ne sais si je le désire de bonne foi.

Si je parviens à me voir exilé, mon choix ne sera pas douteux. Lausanne a eu mes prémices; elle me sera toujours chère par le doux souvenir de ma jeunesse. Au bout de trente ans, je me rappelle les polissons qui sont aujourd'hui juges, les petites filles de la société du printemps, qui sont devenues grand-mères. Votre pays est charmant, et, malgré le dégoût de Jean Jaques, les mœurs, et l'esprit de ses habitans, me paroissent très assortis aux bords du lac Léman. Mais un trésor que je ne trouverois qu'à Lausanne, c'est un ami qui me convient également par les sentimens et les idées, avec qui je n'ai jamais connu un instant d'ennui, de sécheresse, ou de réserve. Autrefois, dans nos libres épanchemens, nous avons cent fois fait le projet de vivre ensemble, et cent fois nous avons épulché tous les détails du roman, avec une chaleur qui nous étonnoit nous mêmes. A présent il demeure, ou plutôt vous demeurez, (car je me lasse de ce ton étudié,) dans une maison charmante et commode; je vois d'ici mon appartement, nos salles communes, notre table, et nos promenades; mais ce mariage ne vaut rien, s'il ne convient pas également aux deux poux; et je sens combien des circonstances locales,

des goûts nouveaux, de nouvelles liaisons, peuvent s'opposer aux desseins, qui nous ont paru les plus agréables dans le lointain. Pour fixer mes idées, et pour nous épargner des regrets, il faut me dévoiler, avec la franchise dont je vous ai donné l'exemple, le tableau extérieur et intérieur de George Deyverdun. Mon amour est trop délicat, pour supporter l'indifférence et les égards, et je rougirois d'un bonheur dont je serois redevable, non à l'inclination, mais à la fidélité de mon ami. Pour m'armer contre les malheurs possibles, hélas ! peut-être trop vraisemblables, j'ai essayé de me détacher de la pensée de ce projet favori, et de me représenter à Lausanne votre bon voisin, sans être précisément votre commensal. Si j'y étois réduit, je ne voudrois pas tenir maison, autant par raison d'économie, que pour éviter l'ennui de manger seul. D'un autre côté, une pension ouverte, fut-elle montée sur l'ancien pied de celle de Mesery, ne conviendrait plus à mon âge, ni à mon caractère. Passerois-je ma vie au milieu d'une foule de jeunes Anglois échappés du collège, moi qui aimerois Lausanne cent fois davantage, si j'y pouvois être le seul de ma nation ? Il me faudroit donc une maison commode et riante, un état au dessus de la bourgeoisie, un mari instruit, une femme qui ne ressembleroit pas à madame Pavilliard, et l'assurance d'y être reçu comme le fils unique, ou plutôt comme le frère de la famille. Pour nous arranger sans gêne, je meublerai très volontiers un joli appartement sous le même toit, où dans le voisinage, et puisque le ménage le plus foible laisse encore de l'étoffe pour une forte pension, je ne serois pas obligé de chicaner sur les conditions pécuniaires. Si je me vois déchu de cette dernière espérance, je renoncerois en soupirant à ma seconde patrie, pour chercher un nouvel asyle, non pas à Genève, triste séjour du travail et de la discorde, mais aux bords du lac de Neufchatel, parmi les bons Savoyards de Chamberry, ou sous, le beau climat des Provinces Méridionales de la France. Je finis brusquement, parceque j'ai mille

choses à vous dire. Je pense que nous nous ressemblons pour la correspondance. Pour le bavardage savant ou même amical, je suis de tous les hommes le plus paresseux, mais dès qu'il s'agit d'un objet réel, d'un service essentiel, le premier courrier emporte toujours ma réponse. A la fin d'un mois, je commencerai à compter les semaines, les jours, les heures. Ne me les faites pas compter trop long tems. *Vale.*

[TRANSLATION.]

How I love the sweet and perfect accordance of our reciprocal sentiments! We love one another at a distance, and in silence, each being satisfied from time to time to receive tidings of the health and happiness of his friend. At present I am called upon to address you, and I commence without excuse and without complaint, as if we were about to resume a familiar conversation of the preceding day. If I intended to give an accurate account of my study, my employment, my amusements, my new connections, my political career—always a silent one, but in some degree connected with grand events—I might multiply my quartos; and I do not yet know your opinion upon those which I have already supplied. In modern history, we should always be pondering on the decline of empires; and as well as I can recollect, and on the report of our friend Brignon, you have as little esteem for the power of England as for that of the Romans. Our fall, in the meantime, has been more gentle. After an unsuccessful war, and a peace by no means glorious, enough remains to leave us content and happy; and when I am deprived of the post of a member of parliament, in order to resume the philosopher and historian, we shall be able to approach to an agreement of opinion on most of the astonishing scenes which have just passed before our eyes, and which will furnish a rich supply of subject to the most able of my successors.

Let us confine ourselves at present to the least illustrious of the two subjects, no doubt, but that which is the most interesting to ourselves; and it is something to say, that the same subject can interest two mortals who have scarcely seen, or even written to, each other, for—yes, by my faith—for nearly eight years. My pen, very idle in the beginning, or probably even before I begin, proceeds rapidly enough when once it is put in due course; but one reason which prevents me from giving scope to its facility, originates in the hope of being soon able to employ that more commodious instrument the tongue. What a silly animal is that man—that Englishman—that Gibbon! I hope, I desire, and can accomplish, a certain object, if I please, but I cannot decide to really will it; and know still less if I shall execute that which I am inclined to. Behold the state of the case as far as I can unfold it to you, or even as I myself understand my real intentions, which appear to me to be very obscure and very equivocal; have the kindness, therefore, to listen to what will form my future conduct. You well recollect, sir, that my grandfather made his fortune—that my father has fed upon it with a somewhat wasteful appetite—and that I enjoy the fruit, or rather the remnant, of their joint labours. You have not forgotten that I entered Parliament without either patriotism or ambition, and that all my prospects were confined to the convenient and respectable post of a *Lord of Trade*. That place I finally obtained, and possessed for three years (from 1779 to 1782;) and the net produce, amounting to 750*l.* sterling per annum, augmented my income to the level of my necessities and desires. But in the spring of last year the storm rolled over our heads. Lord North has been overthrown, your humble servant dismissed, and the board of which I was a member broken and dispersed for ever, in common with many other places, by the reform bill of Mr Burke. To add to my misfortune, I have remained a member

of the House of Commons: at the close of the last Parliament (1780) indeed, Mr Eliot withdrew his nomination, but the favour of lord North procured my re-entry, and gratitude imposed on me the duty of discharging by my services the obligation thus incurred. This winter we have combatted under the joint standard (you know our history) of lord North and Mr Fox, and have triumphed over lord Shelburne and the peace. With considerable wit, and very respectable qualities, lord North has no longer either the title or the credit of prime minister; more active colleagues have deprived him of the most luscious tit-bits, which are quickly devoured by the rapacity of their respective dependents. Our misfortunes, and our reforms, have also diminished the number of disposable benefits; while, owing both to pride and to idleness, I am a poor solicitant—and, if I should even succeed, it might be at the eve of a new revolution, which would cause me to lose, in a moment, the object of so much care and assiduity. If I consulted only my inclination and reason, I should instantly break asunder the unworthy chain of dependence, quit Parliament, London, and England, and seek under a more genial sky, and in a more tranquil country, repose, liberty, leisure, and an enlightened and amiable society. Some years of my life would pass away without hope and without fear, and I should return to my country a man comparatively free, rich, and respectable, both in station and character. My friends, and, above all, lord Sheffield, will not allow me to be happy in accordance with my own taste and convictions. Their freedom imposes upon me the necessity of exerting all my efforts to procure a permanent office which would produce me a thousand pounds a-year, but which would at the same time occupy five days a-week. I have been carried away by their zeal, and have promised them not to depart until autumn, after having dedicated the summer to this concluding exertion.

Success however is very uncertain, and I know not even whether I in reality desire it.

Should I finally determine upon exile, my choice of the place will not be long doubtful. Lausanne received my first fruits, and will always be dear to me, owing to the grateful remembrance of my youth. At the termination of thirty years, I recal to mind the youthful wags who are at present judges, and the little girls of the Society of Spring, who are now grandmothers. Your country is delightful, and, in spite of the disgust of Jean Jacques, the manners and the minds of the inhabitants appear to me to be well adapted to the banks of the Leman Lake. But a treasure which I should find only at Lausanne is a friend whose sentiments and opinions accord with my own, and with whom I have never experienced a moment of *ennui*, of dryness, or of reserve. In former days, in our free effusions, we have a hundred times concerted the project of living together, and for a hundred times arranged all the details of a romance with an animation which has been surprising even to ourselves. At present he resides, or rather *you* reside (for I am weary of this studied manner) in a charming and commodious house; I contemplate from this distance my private room, our common apartments, our table, and our walks; but this union would go for nothing if it did not equally well suit both the contracting parties; and I feel how many local circumstances, new tastes and habits, may be opposed to designs which may have appeared pleasant enough in times past. In order to settle my notions, and to spare ourselves useless regret, you must expose to me, with a freedom of which I have shewn the example, the exterior and interior of George Deyverdun. My regard is too delicate to support indifference, or to endure sacrifice for my own sake; and I should blush for a happiness which was granted more from friendship than inclination. To arm me against this possible, nay, alas! but too likely, misfortune, I have endea-

voured to represent to myself a residence at Lausanne as your neighbour, without being exactly your inmate. If I was reduced to that necessity, I would decline keeping house, not only for reasons of economy, but to escape the *ennui* of eating alone. On the other hand, an open boarding house, in the old footing of that of Mesery, would be no longer adapted either to my age or my character. Ought I to pass my life in the midst of a crowd of young Englishmen just escaped from college? I who should love Lausanne a thousand times better, if I were the only one of my country who resided there? I should require an abode commodious and pleasant, a condition above that of tradesmanship, a well-informed husband, a wife who would not resemble madame Pavilliard, and an assurance of being received as a son, or rather a brother, of the family. In order to accommodate matters with less difficulty, I would willingly furnish a handsome apartment under the same roof, or in the neighbourhood; and since the most moderate means will still leave me sufficient to allow handsome remuneration as a boarder, I should be under no necessity of cavilling in respect to pecuniary conditions. Should this last hope fall to the ground, I would renounce with a sigh my second country, in order to seek a new asylum, not at Geneva, that melancholy abode of anxiety and discord, but on the borders of the lake of Neufchatel, among the good Savoyards of Chamberry, or under the fine climate of the southern provinces of France. I finish abruptly, because I have yet a thousand things to say. I think that we resemble each other in the article of correspondence. At learned, or even amicable trifling, I am of all men the most idle; but when real business, or an essential service, is to be attended to, my answer is expedited by the first post. At the expiration of a month I shall begin to count the weeks, the days, and the hours. Do not occupy me long in the reckoning. Vale.

No. CXLI.

M. GIBBON A M. DEYVERDUN.

JE reçois votre lettre* du 10 Juin, le 21 de ce mois. Aujourd'hui Mardi 24, je mets la main à la plume (comme dit M. Fréron) pour y répondre, quoique ma missive ne puisse partir par arrangement des postes, que Vendredi prochain, 27 du courant. O merveille de la grace efficace ! Elle n'agit pas moins puissamment sur vous, et moyennant le secours toujours prêt, et toujours prompt de nos couriers, un mois nous suffit pour la demande et la réponse. Je remercie mille fois le génie de l'amitié, qui m'a poussé, après mille efforts inutiles, à vous écrire enfin au moment le plus critique et le plus favorable. Jamais démarche n'a répondu si parfaitement à tous mes vœux et à toutes mes espérances. Je comptois sans doute sur la durée et la vérité de vos sentimens ; mais j'ignorois (telle est la foiblesse humaine) jusqu'à quel point ils avoient pu être attiédies par le tems et l'éloignement ; et je savois encore moins l'état actuel de votre santé, de votre fortune et de vos liaisons, qui auroient pu opposer tant d'obstacles à notre réunion. Vous m'écrivez, vous m'aimez toujours ; vous désirez avec zèle, avec ardeur, de réaliser nos anciens projets ; vous le pouvez, vous le voulez ; vous m'offrez dès l'automne votre maison, et quelle terrasse ! votre société, et quelle société ! L'arrangement nous convient à tous les deux ; je retrouve à la fois le compagnon de ma jeunesse, un sage conseiller, et un peintre qui fait représenter et exagérer même les objets les plus rians. Ces exagérations me font pour le moins autant de plaisir que la simple vérité. Si votre portrait étoit tout à fait res-

* A reply to Mr Gibbon, accepting his proposal, and describing his house and the nature of the society at Lausanne, so well delineated, in other places, by Mr Gibbon himself.—ED. AUT.

semblant, ces agrémens n'existeroient que hors de nous mêmes, et j'aime encore mieux les trouver dans la vivacité de votre cœur et de votre imagination. Ce n'est pas que je ne reconnoisse un grand fond de vérité dans le tableau de Lausanne ; je connois le lieu de la scène, je me transporte en idée sur notre terrasse, je vois ces côteaux, ce lac, ces montagnes, ouvrages favoris de la nature, et je conçois sans peine les embellissemens que votre goût s'est plu y ajouter. Je me rappelle depuis vingt ou trente ans les mœurs, l'esprit, l'aisance de la société, et je comprends que ce véritable ton de la bonne compagnie se perpétue, et s'épure de père en fils, ou plutôt de mère en fille ; car il m'a toujours paru qu'à Lausanne, aussi bien qu'en France, les femmes sont très supérieurs aux hommes. Dans un pareil séjour, je craindrois la dissipation bien plus que l'ennui, et le tourbillon de Lausanne étonneroit un philosophe accoutumé depuis tant d'années à la tranquillité de Londres. Vous êtes trop instruit pour regarder ce propos, comme une mauvaise plaisanterie ; c'est dans les détroits qu'on est entraîné par la rapidité des courans : il n'y en a point en pleine mer. Dès qu'on ne recherche plus les plaisirs bruyans, et qu'on s'affranchit volontiers des devoirs pénibles, la liberté d'un simple particulier se fortifie par l'immensité de la ville. Quant à moi, l'application à mon grand ouvrage, l'habitude, et la récompense du travail, m'ont rendu plus studieux, plus sédentaire, plus ami de la retraite. La Chambre des Communes et les grands dîners exigent beaucoup de tems ; et la tempérance d'un repas anglois vous permet de goûter de cinq ou six vins différens, et vous ordonne de boire une bouteille de claret après le dessert. Mais enfin je ne soupe jamais, je me couche de bonne heure, je reçois peu de visites, les matinées sont longues, les étés sont libres, et dès que je ferme ma porte, je suis oublié du monde entier. Dans une société plus bornée et plus amicale, les démarches sont publiques, les droits sont réciproques, l'on dîne

de bonne heure, on se goûte trop pour ne pas passer l'après-midi ensemble ; on soupe, on veille, et les plaisirs de la soirée ne laissent pas de déranger le repos de la nuit, et le travail du lendemain. Quel est cependant le résultat de ces plaintes ? c'est seulement que la mariée est trop belle, et que j'ose me servir de l'excuse honnête de la santé et du privilège d'un homme de lettres ; il ne tiendra qu'à moi de modérer un peu l'excès de mes jouissances. Pour cet engouement que vous m'annoncez, et qui a toujours été le défaut des peuples les plus spirituels, je l'ai déjà éprouvé sur un plus grand théâtre. Il y a six ans que l'ami de madame Necker fut reçu à Paris, comme celui de George Deyverdun pourroit l'être à Lausanne. Je ne connois rien de plus flatteur que cet accueil favorable d'un public poli et éclairé. Mais cette faveur, si douce pour l'étranger, n'est-elle pas un peu dangereuse pour l'habitant exposé à voir flétrir ses lauriers, par la faute ou par l'inconstance de ses juges ? Non ; on se soutient toujours, peut-être pas précisément, au même point d'élévation. A l'abri de trois gros volumes in-quarto en langue étrangère, encore ce qui n'est pas un petit avantage, je conserverai toujours la réputation littéraire, et cette réputation donnera du relief aux qualités sociales, si l'on trouve l'historien sans travers, sans affectation, et sans prétentions. Je serai donc charmé et content de votre société, et j'aurois pu dire en deux mots, ce qui j'ai bavardé en deux pages ; mais il y a tant de plaisir à bavarder avec un ami ! car enfin je possède à Lausanne un véritable ami ; et les simples connoissances remplaceront, sans beaucoup de peine, tout ce qui s'appelle liaison, et même amitié, dans ce vaste désert de Londres. Mais au moment où j'écris, je vois de tous côtés une foule d'objets dont la perte sera bien plus difficile à réparer. Vous connoissiez ma bibliothèque ; mais je suis en état de vous rendre le propos de votre maison ; *c'est bien autre chose à cette heure ; formée peu à peu, mais avec beaucoup de soin et de*

dépense, elle peut se nommer aujourd'hui un beau cabinet de particulier. Non content de remplir à rangs redoublés la meilleure pièce qui lui étoit destinée, elle s'est débordée dans la chambre sur la rue, dans votre ancienne chambre à coucher, dans la mienne, dans tous les recoins de la maison de *Bentinck street*, et jusques dans une chaumière que je me suis donnée à *Hampton Court*.

J'ai mille courtisans rangés autour de moi :

Ma retraite est mon Louvre, et j'y commande en roi.

Le fonds est de la meilleure compagnie Grecque, Latine, Italienne, François, et Angloise ; et les autres, les moins chers à l'homme de goût, des Ecclésiastiques, des Byzantins, des Orientaux, sont les plus nécessaires à l'historien de la Décadence et de la Chute, &c. Vous ne sentez que trop bien le désagrément de laisser, et l'impossibilité de transporter, cinq ou six milles volumes, d'autant plus que le ciel n'a pas voulu faire de la Suisse un pays maritime. Cependant mon zèle pour la réussite de nos projets communs, me fait imaginer que ces obstacles pourront s'applanir, et que je puis adoucir ou supporter ces privations douloureuses. Les bons auteurs classiques, la bibliothèque des nations, se retrouvent dans tous les pays. Lausanne n'est pas dépourvu de livres, ni de politesse ; et j'ai dans l'esprit qu'on pourroit acquérir pour un certain tems, quelque bibliothèque d'un vieillard ou d'un mineur, dont la famille ne voudroit pas se défaire entièrement. Quant aux outils de mon travail, nous commencerons par examiner l'état de nos richesses ; après quoi il faudroit faire un petit calcul du prix, du poids, et de la rareté, de chaque ouvrage, pour juger de ce qu'il seroit nécessaire de transporter de Londres, et n'acheteroit plus commodément en de ces frais, on devroit les envisager ; d'une manufacture transplantée en l'ont on espère retirer dans la suite de. Malheureusement votre bibliothèque y ajoutant même celle de M. de

Bochat, est assez piteuse ; mais celles de Berne et de Basle sont très nombreuses, et je compterois assez sur la bonhomie Helvétique, pour espérer que, moyennant des recommandations et des cautions, il me seroit permis d'en tirer les livres dont j'aurois essentiellement besoin. Vous êtes très bien placé pour prendre les informations, et pour fixer les démarches convenables ; mais vous voyez du moins combien je me retourne de tous les côtés, pour esquiver la difficulté la plus formidable.

Venons à présent à des objets moins relevés, mais très importants à l'existence et au bien-être de l'animal, le logement, les domestiques, et la table. Pour mon appartement particulier, une chambre à coucher avec un grand cabinet et une antichambre, auroient suffi à tous mes besoins ; mais si vous pouvez vous en passer, je me promènerai avec plaisir dans l'immensité de vos onze pièces, qui s'accommoderont sans doute aux heures et aux saisons différentes. L'article des domestiques renferme une assez forte difficulté, sur laquelle je dois vous consulter. Vous connoissez, et vous estimez Caplin, mon valet de chambre, maître d'hôtel, &c. qui a été nourri dans notre maison, et qui comptoit y finir ses jours. Depuis votre départ, ses talens et ses vertus se sont développés de plus en plus, et je le considère bien moins sur le pied d'un domestique, que sur celui d'un ami. Malheureusement il ne sait que l'Anglois, et jamais il n'apprendra de langue étrangère. Il m'accompagna, il y a six ans, dans mon voyage à Paris, mais il rapporta fidèlement à Londres toute l'ignorance et tous les préjugés d'un bon patriote. A Lausanne il me coûteroit beaucoup, et à l'exception du service personnel, il ne nous seroit que d'une très petite utilité. Cependant je supporterois volontiers cette dépense, mais je suis très persuadé que, si son attachement le portoit à me suivre, il s'ennuyeroit à mourir dans un pays où tout lui seroit étranger et désagréable. Il faudroit donc me détacher d'un

homme dont je connois le zèle, la fidélité, rompre tout d'un coup de petites habitudes qui sont liées avec le bien-être journalier et momentané, et se résoudre à lui substituer un visage nouveau, peut-être un mauvais sujet, toujours quelque aventurier Suisse pris sur le pavé de Londres. Vous rappelez-vous un certain George Suisse qui a fait autre fois avec moi le voyage de France et d'Italie? Je le crois marié et établi à Lausanne; s'il vit encore, si vous pouvez l'engager à se rendre ici, pour me ramener en Suisse, la compagnie d'un bon et ancien serviteur ne laisseroit pas d'adoucir la chute, et il resteroit peut-être auprès de moi, jusqu'à ce que nous eussions choisi un jeune homme du pays, adroit, modeste, et bien élevé, à qui je ferois un parti avantageux. Les autres domestiques, gouvernantes, laquais, cuisinière, &c. se prennent et se renvoient sans difficulté. Un article bien plus important, c'est notre table; car enfin nous ne sommes pas assez hermites, pour nous contenter des légumes et des fruits de votre jardin, tout excellens qu'ils sont; mais je n'ai presque rien à ajouter à l'honnêteté de vos propos, qui me donnent beaucoup plus de plaisir que de surprise. Si je me trouvois sans fortune, au lieu de rougir des bienfaites de l'amitié, j'accepterois vos offres aussi simplement que vous les faites. Mais nous ne sommes pas réduits à ce point, et vous comprenez assez qu'une déconfiture Angloise laisse encore une fortune fort décente au Pays de Vaud; et pour vous dire quelque chose de plus précis, je dépenserois sans peine et sans inconvénient cinq ou six cens louis. Vous connoissez le résultat aussi bien que les détails d'un ménage; en supposant une petite table de deux philosophes Epicuriens, quatre, cinq, ou six domestiques, des amis souvent, des repas assez rarement, beaucoup de dépenses, et peu de luxe, à combien estimez-vous en dépense d'un mois et d'une année? Le par- vous avez déjà fait, me paroît des plus raisonnables, et vous me logez, et je vous nourris. A votre

calcul, j'ajouterois mon entretien personnel, habits, plaisirs, gages de domestiques, &c. et je verrois d'une manière assez nette, l'ensemble de mon petit établissement.

Après avoir essayé tant de détails minutieux, le cher lecteur s'imagine sans doute que la résolution de me fixer pendant quelque tems aux bords du Lac Léman, est parfaitement décidée. Hélas ! rien n'est moins vrai ; mais je me suis livré au charme délicieux de compter, de fonder, de palper ce bonheur, dont je sens tout le prix, qui est à ma portée, et auquel l'aurai peut-être la bêtise de renoncer. Vous avez raison de croire, mais vous ignorez jusqu'à quel point vous l'avez, que ma carrière politique a été plus semée d'épines que de roses. Eh ! quel objet, quel mortel, pourroit me consoler de l'ennui des affaires, et de la honte de la dépendance ? *La gloire ?* Comme homme de lettres, j'en jouis, comme orateur je ne l'aurai jamais, et le nom des simples soldats est oublié dans les victoires aussi bien que dans les défaites. *Le devoir ?* Dans ces combats à l'aveugle, où les chefs ne cherchent que leur avantage particulier, il y a toujours à parier que les subalternes feront plus de mal que de bien. *L'attachement personnel ?* Les ministres sont rarement dignes de l'inspirer ; jusqu'à présent lord North n'a pas eu à se plaindre de moi, et si je me retire du parlement, il lui sera très aisé d'y substituer un autre muet, tout aussi affidé que son ancien serviteur. Je suis intimement convaincu, et par la raison, et par le sentiment, qu'il n'y a point de parti, qui me convienne aussi bien que de vivre avec vous, et auprès de vous à Lausanne ; et si je parviens à la place (*Commissioner of the Excise or Customs*) où je vise, il y aura toutes les semaines cinq longues matinées, qui m'avertiront de la folie de mon choix. Vous vous trompez à la vérité à l'égard de l'instabilité de ces emplois ; ils sont presque les seuls qui ne ressentent jamais des révolutions du ministère. Cependant si cette place s'offroit bientôt, je n'aurois

pas le bon sens et le courage de la refuser. Quels autres conseillers veux-je prendre, sinon mon cœur et ma raison? Il en est de puissans et toujours écoutés : les égards, la mauvaise honte, tous mes amis, ou soi-disant tels, s'écrieront que je suis un homme perdu, ruiné, un fou qui se dérobe à ses protecteurs, un misanthrope qui s'exile au bout du monde, et puis les exagérations sur tout ce qui seroit fait en ma faveur, si surement, si promptement, si libéralement. Milord Sheffield opinera à me faire interdire et enfermer ; mes deux tantes et ma belle mère se plaindront que je les quitte pour jamais, &c. Et l'embarras de prendre mon bonnet de nuit, comme disoit le sage Fontenelle, lorsqu'il n'étoit question que de se coucher, combien de bonnets de nuit ne me faudra-t-il pas prendre, et les prendre tout seul? car tout le monde, amis, parens, domestiques, s'opposera à ma fuite. Voilà la vérité des obstacles assez peu redoutables, et en les décrivant, je sens qu'ils s'affoiblissent dans mon esprit. Grace à ce long bavardage vous connoissez mon intérieur, comme moi même, c'est à dire assez mal ; mais cette incertitude, très amicale pour moi, seroit très facheuse pour vous. Votre réponse me parviendra vers la fin de Juillet et huit jours après, je vous promets une réplique nette et décisive : *je pars* ou *je reste*. Si je pars, ce sera au milieu de Septembre ; je mangerai les raisins de votre treille les premiers jours d'Octobre, et vous aurez encore le tems de me charger de vos commissions. Ne me dites plus, *Monsieur et très cher ami* ; le premier est froid, le second est superflu.

[TRANSLATION.]

I RECEIVED your letter of the 10th of June on the 21st of the present month. On this day, the 24th March, I take pen in hand (as M. Freron says) to reply to it, although my letter, in conformity with the regulations of the post-office, cannot depart before Friday next, the 27th instant. Oh miracle of effica-

cious grace! It acts not less powerfully on yourself, and with the constantly prompt and ready aid of the post, one month will suffice for a question and answer. I thank the genius of friendship a thousand times, which has informed me, after a thousand useless efforts, to write to you at last, at the most critical and favourable opportunity. Never proceeding so perfectly answered my hopes and my wishes. I doubtless relied on the constancy and truth of your friendly sentiments: but I was ignorant (such is human weakness) how far they might be weakened by time and distance; and I know still less of your health, fortune, and other matters, which might oppose many obstacles to our coming together. You write that you continue to love me, that you zealously and ardently desire to fulfil our ancient project; that you both can and will do so. You offer me your house as soon as autumn arrives;—and such a terrace!—Your society—and such society! The arrangement suits us both. I find at once the companion of my youth, a wise counsellor, and a painter who can magnify and embellish the most pleasing anticipations. Your exaggeration pleases me at least as much as the simple truth: if your portraits strictly resembled, their charms would exist only out of ourselves; and I prefer finding them in the warmth of your heart and imagination. It is not but that I recognise a great foundation of truth in your picture of Lausanne: I am acquainted with the locality of the scene; I transport myself in idea upon your terrace; I perceive those hills, that lake, those mountains, to which you advert; and I conceive without difficulty the embellishments which they have derived from your taste in description. I recall to mind the manners, the spirit, and the ease, of the society, twenty or thirty years ago; and I conclude that this, true tone of good company, is perpetuated and purified from father to son, or rather from mother to daughter, for it has always appeared to me that, in Lausanne as well as in France,

the women are very superior to the men. In such an abode I should fear dissipation more than *ennui*, and the whirl of Lausanne may distract a philosopher accustomed for so many years to the tranquillity of London. You are too well informed to regard this observation as an insipid joke; it is in straits that we are carried away by the rapidity of currents; they exist not in the open sea. As soon as we become satiated with bustling amusement, and voluntarily emancipate ourselves from difficult duties, the liberty of a simple private individual is increased by the immensity of a metropolis. With respect to myself, application to my great work, habit, and remuneration for the labour, have rendered me more studious, more sedentary, and a greater lover of retirement. The House of Commons, and great dinners, exact too much time; and the temperance of an English repast permits a taste of five or six different kinds of wine, and ordains the drinking of a bottle of claret after the desert. But then I never sup, and I go to bed in good time, and receive few visits. The mornings are long, the summers disengaged; and as soon as I shut the door, I am forgotten by all the world. In a limited and friendly society proceedings are more open, the rights more reciprocal; the people dine early, and enjoy the repast too much not to pass the afternoon together. They sup, sit late, and the pleasure of the evenings fails not to disturb both the repose of the night and the employment of the morning. What in the mean time is the object of these complaints? It is only that the bride is too handsome, and that I dare not avail myself of the decent excuse of health, and the privilege of a man of letters: it belongs only to myself to moderate a little this excess of enjoyment. As to that absorption which you announce to me, and which is always a fault with the most intellectual people, I have already experienced it upon a wider theatre. About six years ago, the friend of Mad. Necker was received at Paris, as that of George Dey-

verdun might be received at Lausanne. I am not aware of anything more flattering than this favourable reception by a well-informed and polished circle : but this kindness, so pleasant to a visitor, is it not somewhat dangerous to a resident, exposed to the danger of seeing his laurels wither by the caprice or inconsistency of his judges ? No ; they will always support their reputation ; but possibly not to the same degree. Under cover of three thick volumes in quarto, in a foreign language, which is not a small advantage, I shall always retain a literary reputation, and that reputation will afford a relief to my social qualifications, if the historian be found without petulance, without affectation, and without pretensions. I shall therefore be delighted and content in your society, and be able to say, in two words, that which I have spread over two pages ; but there is so much pleasure in trifling with a friend !—for do I not possess at Lausanne a true friend ?—while mere acquaintance will replace without much trouble all which is called connexion, and even friendship, in this vast desert of London. But at the very time that I thus write, I perceive around me a throng of objects, the loss of which it will be more difficult to repair. You know my library ; it is now in a state which should induce me to give up the idea of occupying your house with it. It is no longer the same thing : formed by degrees, and with care and expense, it may now be called a fine private collection. Not content with filling the best apartment, appropriated to it with double rows of books, they are placed in the chamber next the street, in your former sleeping room, in mine, in every corner of the house in Bentinck street, and even in a cottage which I have taken at Hampton Court.

My courtiers stand around me in a ring ;
My study is my court, I there am king.

Those of the superior class are Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English ; the others, of less value in the

estimation of a man of taste, ecclesiastical, Byzantines, and Orientals, are necessary to the historian of the Decline and Fall. You will feel but too clearly the difficulty of leaving behind, and the impossibility of transporting, five or six thousand volumes; especially as heaven has not made Switzerland a maritime country. In the mean time, my anxiety for the success of our common projects has induced me to believe that these obstacles may be overcome, and that I can lessen or support these melancholy privations. The good classic authors—the library of nations—are to be found in every country: Lausanne is neither destitute of books nor of politeness; and I indulge a hope that I may be enabled to acquire, for a given time, the use of the library of some old man or some minor, which the family may not be inclined to dispose of. As the tools with which I labour, we will begin by examining the state of our treasure; after which it will be necessary to make a brief calculation of the price, the value, and the rarity, of each work, in order to determine which it will be necessary to have from London, and which may be purchased more conveniently in Switzerland. In regard to expense, we ought to regard them in the light of manufactures transported from a foreign country, from which a reasonable profit may in the end be expected. Unfortunately your public library, even with the addition of that of M. Bochat, is sufficiently pitiable; but those of Berne and of Basle are very numerous; and I count upon Helvetius's goodness and benevolence to allow me, on the strength of recommendation and guarantee of due caution, the use of such books as I shall most require. You are well situated to acquire the necessary information, and to fix upon the proper steps to be taken: at all events, you will be satisfied that I am watchful on all sides for means to remove the most formidable difficulty.

At present, let us attend to subjects less elevated,

but at the same time very important to the existence and well-being of the animal man—lodging, domestics, and table. For my own use, a bed-chamber, with a large closet and an anti-chamber, will be sufficient; but, if you can allow of it, I shall with pleasure roam through your eleven apartments, which doubtless are suitable to the different seasons and times of the day. The article of servants comprises a great difficulty, in respect to which I ought to consult you. You know and you esteem Caplin, my *valet de chambre*, *maître d'hôtel*, &c., who was brought up in our family, and who relied on finishing his days with us. Since your departure, his talents and his virtues have developed themselves more and more, and I consider him less on the footing of a domestic than of a friend. Unhappily he is acquainted with the English language only, and will never acquire any other. He accompanied me six years ago in my journey to Paris, but he brought back faithfully to London all the ignorance and prejudices of a good patriot. At Lausanne he will cost me a great deal, and, except for my own personal service, be of little utility. I would, nevertheless, very willingly support that expense, but I am persuaded that, if led by attachment to accompany me, he would be wearied to death in a country where everything would be strange or disagreeable to him. I must therefore part from a man of whose zeal and fidelity I am assured, break all of a sudden through all the little habits which are connected with daily and momentary comfort, and resolve to procure a substitute in a new face, perhaps an individual of indifferent character, or some Swiss adventurer from the *pavé* of London. You will recollect a certain George Swiss, who formerly attended me in a tour of France and Italy. I believe that he is married and settled at Lausanne; if he is still alive, and you can engage him to repair here, and accompany me back to Switzerland, the attendance of an old and good servant might soften the change, and he might remain

with me at least until I could select some young man of the country, handy, modest, and well brought up, whom I would remunerate with liberality. Other domestics, women servants, footman, cook, &c., may be hired and parted with less incommodiously. Our table will be an affair of more importance, for we are not such hermits as to be satisfied with the vegetables and fruit of your garden, excellent as they are; but I have nothing to add in amendment of your proposal, which gives me more pleasure than surprise. If I saw myself deprived of fortune, instead of blushing to receive the assistance of friendship, I would accept your offers with as much ingenuousness as they are made. But we are not reduced to this alternative; and you will readily comprehend, that an English discomfiture in the path to fortune may leave a very decent competency for the Pays de Vaud; and, to make you understand the matter with greater precision, I will add, that I can expend five or six hundred Louis a-year without difficulty or inconvenience. You know the expense as well as the details of an establishment, on the supposition of a small table for two Epicurean philosophers, four, five, or six domestics, some friends pretty frequently, entertainments but rarely, much enjoyment with little luxury; and how do you estimate the expense, by the month or the year? The division that you have proposed to me is very reasonable; you lodge me, I feed you. To your calculation I shall have to add my own personal expenses, clothing, amusements, servants' wages, &c.; and I shall then acquire with sufficient precision the entire amount of my little establishment.

After having discussed so many details, the dear reader addressed is convinced, without doubt, that my resolution to settle for some time on the borders of the Lemman Lake is perfectly decided. Alas! nothing is less the fact; but I deliver myself up to the delicious charm of estimating, arranging, and anticipating the happiness, of which I know all the value, that

awaits my acceptance, but which I may be still sufficiently stupid to reject. You have reason to believe, but you are ignorant to what extent you are justified in believing, that my political path has been strewn with more thorns than roses. Oh! what object, or what mortal man, can recompence me for the tiresomeness of business, and the ignominy of dependance?—*Glory*? As a man of letters I enjoy it; as an orator I never can obtain it; and the names of simple soldiers in the ranks are forgotten as much in victories as in defeats.—*Duty*? In these blind combats, where the leaders seek only their own private advantage, it may always be wagered that the subalterns will receive more injury than benefit.—*Personal attachment*? Ministers are rarely found to inspire it: up to this time lord North has nothing to complain of as regards me; and, if I retire from parliament, it will be easy to replace me by another mute, quite as trusty as his ancient dependant. I am fully convinced, both by reason and feeling, that I can adopt no resolution that will suit me half so well as that of living with you, or near you, at Lausanne; and if I succeed in acquiring the place (that of commissioner of the excise or customs) at which I aim, the engrossment of five long mornings in every week would soon convince me of the folly of my choice. You are mistaken with regard to the stability of these employments, which are almost the only ones which are not affected by changes of administration. Nevertheless, should this place be offered soon, I shall not have the good sense and courage to refuse it. What other counsellors ought I to consult, if not my heart and understanding? Some which are powerful, and always attended to; reputation, false shame; all my friends or pretended friends, will exclaim that I am a lost and ruined man, a fool who has deprived himself of patrons, a misanthrope who has exiled himself to a corner of the world; and then the exaggeration as to all which would so certainly, so promptly, and so

liberally, have been done for me. Lord Sheffield decidedly interdicts and withholds me; my two aunts and my mother-in-law complain that I am about to quit them for ever. "And then the trouble of putting on my night-cap," as the wise Fontenelle observed, when a question arose on the expediency of going to bed. How many night-caps must I not put on, and that one by one? for everybody, friends, relations, and servants, are all opposed to my retreat. Behold a muster of obstacles sufficiently formidable; but in detailing them I find that they become weaker in my estimation. Thanks to this long piece of gossiping; you now know the interior of my mind as well as myself, that is to say, very poorly. But this uncertainty, however friendly as regards me, may be vexatious in respect to yourself. Your answer will reach me towards the end of July, and in the course of the eight days which follow I promise you a clear and explicit announcement—*I come* or *I remain*. If I come, it will be in the middle of September, I shall eat grapes from your trellis the beginning of October, and you will have time in the interim to charge me with your commissions. Write no more *Monsieur et très cher ami*; the first is cold, the second superfluous.

No. CXLII.

M. GIBBON A M. DEYVERDUN.

Hampton Court, ce 1 Juillet 1783.

APRES avoir pris ma résolution, l'honneur, et ce qui vaut encore mieux—l'amitié, me défendent de vous laisser un moment dans l'incertitude. JE PARS. Je vous en donne ma parole, et comme je suis bien aise de me fortifier d'un nouveau lien, je vous prie très sérieusement de ne pas m'en dispenser. Ma possession, sans doute, ne vaut pas celle de Julie; mais vous serez plus inexorable que St Preux. Je ne sens plus qu'une vive impatience pour notre réunion.

Mais le mois d'Octobre est encore loin ; 92 jours, et nous aurons tout le tems de prendre, et de nous donner des éclaircissemens dont nous avons besoin. Après un mûr examen, je renonce au voyage de George Suisse, qui me paroît incertain, cher et difficile. Après tout mon valet de chambre et ma bibliothèque sont les deux articles les plus embarrassans. Si je ne retenois pas ma plume, je remplirois sans peine la feuille ; mais il ne faut pas passer du silence à un babil intarissable. * * * * Quand retournez vous à Lausanne vous même ? *Vale.*

[TRANSLATION.]

Hampton Court, 1st July, 1783.

AFTER having taken my resolution, honour, and that which is of still greater value, friendship, forbids me leaving you a moment in a state of uncertainty. I COME. I pledge my word, and, as I willingly fortify myself with an additional tie, I seriously beg of you not to dispense with it. My possession, indeed, is not so valuable as that of Julia, but you will be more inexorable than St Preux. I now feel only a lively impatience for our reunion ; but the month of October is still distant, 92 days, and we shall have sufficient time to give and receive any necessary explanation. Upon serious consideration, I give up the notion of the journey of George Suisse, which appears to me to be uncertain, expensive, and difficult. After all, my *valet de chambre* and my library form the two greatest of my embarrassments. If I did not restrain my pen, I should rapidly fill the sheet ; but it is not advisable to pass from silence to interminable prattle. * * * * When do you return to Lausanne yourself ? *Vale.*

No. CXLIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

July 10th, 1783.

You will read the following lines with more patience and attention than you would probably give to an hasty conference, perpetually interrupted by the opening of the door, and perhaps by the quickness of our own tempers. I neither expect nor desire an answer on a subject of extreme importance to myself, but which friendship alone can render interesting to you. We shall soon meet at Sheffield.

It is needless to repeat the reflections which we have sometimes debated together, and which I have often seriously weighed in my silent solitary walks. Notwithstanding your active and silent spirit, you must allow that there is some perplexity in my present situation, and that my future prospects are distant and cloudy. I have lived too long in the world to entertain a very sanguine idea of the friendship or zeal of ministerial patrons; and we are all sensible how much the powers of patronage are reduced. *

* * * * *

At the end of the parliament, or rather long before that time, (for their lives are not worth a year's purchase) our ministers are kicked down stairs, and I am left their disinterested friend, to fight through another opposition, and to expect the fruits of another revolution. But I will take a more favourable supposition, and conceive myself in six months firmly seated at the board of Customs; before the end of the next six months I should infallibly hang myself. Instead of regretting my disappointment, I rejoice in my escape; as I am satisfied that no salary could pay me for the irksomeness of attendance, and the drudgery of business so repugnant to my taste, (and I will dare to say) so unworthy of my character. With-

out looking forwards to the possibility, still more remote, of exchanging that laborious office for a smaller annuity, there is surely another plan, more reasonable, more simple, and more pleasant,—a temporary retreat to a quiet and less expensive scene. In a four years residence at Lausanne, I should live within my income; save, and even accumulate, my ready money; finish my History, an object of profit, as well as fame; expect the contingencies of elderly lives, and return to England at the age of fifty, to form a lasting independent establishment, without courting the smiles of a minister, or apprehending the downfall of a party. Such have been my serious sober reflections. Yet I much question whether I should have found courage to follow my reason and my inclination, if a friend had not stretched his hand to draw me out of the dirt. The twentieth of last May I wrote to my friend Deyverdun, after a long interval of silence, to expose my situation, and to consult in what manner I might best arrange myself at Lausanne. From his answer, which I received about a fortnight ago, I have the pleasure to learn, that his heart and his house are both open for my reception; that a family which he had lodged for some years is about to leave him; and that at no other time my company could have been so acceptable and convenient. I shall step, at my arrival, into an excellent apartment and a delightful situation; the fair division of our expenses will render them very moderate; and I shall pass my time with the companion of my youth, whose temper and studies have always been congenial to my own. I have given him my word of honour to be at Lausanne in the beginning of October, and no power or persuasion can divert me from this IRREVOCABLE resolution, which I am every day proceeding to execute.

I wish, but I scarcely hope, to convince you of the propriety of my scheme; but at least you will allow, that when we are not able to prevent the *folies* of our

friends, we should strive to render them as easy and harmless as possible. The arrangement of my house, furniture, and books, will be left to meaner hands; but it is to your zeal and judgment alone that I can trust the more important disposal of Lenborough and * * * *. On these subjects we may go into a committee at Sheffield place, but you know it is the rule of a committee not to hear any arguments against the *principle* of the bill. At present I shall only observe, that neither of these negotiations ought to detain me here; the former may be dispatched as well, the latter much better, in my absence. *Vale.*

No. CXLIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Monday, August 18, 1783.

IN the preparation of my journey I have not felt any circumstance more deeply than the kind concern of lady Sheffield and the silent grief of Mrs Porten. Yet the age of my friends makes a very essential difference. I can scarcely hope ever to see my aunt again; but I flatter myself, that in less than two years my *sister** will make me a visit, and that in less than four I shall return it with a cheerful heart at Sheffield place. Business advances; this morning my books were shipped for Rouen, and will reach Lausanne almost as soon as myself. On Thursday morning the bulk of the library moves from Bentinck street to Downing street. I shall escape from the noise to Hampton Court, and spend three or four days in taking leave. I want to know your precise motions, what day you arrive in town, whether you visit lord * * * * * before the races, &c. I am now impatient to be gone, and shall only wait for a last interview with you. Your medley of judges, advo-

* Meaning lady Sheffield.

cates, politicians, &c. is rather *useful* than pleasant. Town is a vast solitude. Adieu.

No. CLXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bentinck street, Aug. 20th, 1783.

I AM now concluding one of the most unpleasant days of my life. Will the day of our meeting again be accompanied with proportionable satisfaction? The business of preparation will serve to agitate and divert *my* thoughts; but I do not like your brooding over melancholy ideas in your solitude, and I heartily wish that both you and my dear lady S. would immediately go over and pass a week at Brighton. Such is our imperfect nature, that dissipation is a far more efficacious remedy than reflection. At all events, let me hear from you soon. I have passed the evening at home, without gaining any intelligence.

No. CXLVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Friday, August 22nd, 1783.

I AM astonished with your apparition and flight, and am at a loss to conjecture the mighty and sudden business of * * * *, which could not be delayed till next week. Timeo * * * * their selfish cunning, and your sanguine unsuspecting spirit. Not dreaming of your arrival, I thought it unnecessary to apprise you, that I delayed my visit to Hampton to this day; on Monday I shall return, and will expect you Tuesday evening, either in Bentinck or Downing street, as you like best. You have seen the piles of learning accumulated in your parlour; the transportation will be achieved to day, and Bentinck street is already reduced to a light, ignorant habitation, which

I shall inhabit till about the first of September; four days must be allowed for clearing and packing; these I shall spend in Downing street, and after seeing you a moment on your return, I shall start about Saturday the sixth. London is a desert, and life, without books, business, or society, will be somewhat tedious. From this state, you will judge that your plan coincides very well, only I think you should give me the whole of Wednesday in Bentinck street. With regard to Bushy, perhaps as a compliment to lord L. you had better defer it till your return. I admire Gregory Way, and should envy him, if I did not possess a disposition somewhat similar to his own. My lady will be reposed and restored at Brighton; the torrent of lords, judges, &c., a proper remedy for you, was a medicine ill-suited to her constitution. I *tenderly* embrace her.

No. CLXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO * * * * *

MY LORD,

I AM ignorant (as I ought to be) of the present state of our negociations of peace; I am likewise ignorant how far I may appear qualified to co-operate in this important and salutary work. If, from any advantages of language or local connections, your lordship should think that my services might be usefully employed, particularly in any future intercourse with the court of France, permit me to say, that my love of ease and literary leisure shall never stand in competition with the obligations of duty and gratitude which I owe to his majesty's government.

I am, with the highest respect, my lord, &c.

No. CXLVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SHEFFIELD.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Bentinck street, Aug. 30th, 1783.

FOR the names of Sheffalina, &c. are too playful for the serious temper of my mind. In the whole period of my life I do not recollect a day in which I felt more unpleasant sensations, than that on which I took my leave of Sheffield place. I forgot my friend Deyverdun, and the fair prospect of quiet and happiness which awaits me at Lausanne. I lost sight of our almost certain meeting at the end of a term which, at our age, cannot appear very distant; nor could I amuse my uneasiness with the hopes, the more doubtful prospect, of your visit to Switzerland. The agitation of preparing everything for my departure has, in some degree, diverted these melancholy thoughts; yet I still look forwards to the decisive day (tomorrow se'nnight) with an anxiety of which yourself and lord Sheffield have the principal share.

Surely never anything was so unlucky as the unseasonable death of sir John Russel, on his passage to his friend at Sheffield place, which so strongly reminded us of the instability of human life and human expectations. The inundation of the assizes must have distressed and overpowered you; but I hope, and I wish to hear from yourself, that the air of your favourite Brighton, the bathing, and the quiet society of two or three friends, have composed and revived your spirits. Present my love to Sarah, and compliments to Miss Carter, &c. Give me a speedy and satisfactory line.

I am most truly yours.

No. CXLIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Downing street, Sept. 8th, 1783.

As we are not unconscious of each other's feelings, I shall only say, that I am glad you did not go alone into Sussex; an American rebel* to dispute with gives a diversion to uneasy spirits, and I heartily wished for such a friend or adversary during the remainder of the day. No letter from Deyverdun; the post is arrived, but two Flanders mails are due. Æolus does not seem to approve of my designs, and there is little merit in waiting till Friday. I should wait with more reluctance, did I think there was much chance of success. I dine with Craufurd, and if anything is decided, will send an extraordinary Gazette. You have obliged me beyond expression by your kindness to aunt Kitty†: she will drink her afternoon tea at Sheffield next Friday. For my sake lady Sheffield will be kind to the old lady, who will not be troublesome, and will vanish at the first idea of Brighton. Has not that salubrious air already produced some effects? Peace will be proclaimed tomorrow; odd! as war was never declared. The buyers of stock seem as indifferent as yourself about the definitive treaty. Tell Maria, that though you had forgotten the *Annales de la Vertu*, I have directed them to be sent, but know nothing of their plan or merit. Adieu. When you see my lady, say everything tender and friendly to her. I did not know how much I loved her. She may depend upon my keeping a separate, though not perhaps a very frequent, account with her. *Apropos*, I think aunt Kitty has a secret

* Mr Silas Deane, formerly in a diplomatic situation at Paris; a man well-informed in the commercial relations of several countries.

† Mrs Porten.

wish to sleep in my room; if it is not occupied, she might be indulged. Once more adieu.

No. CL.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Thursday, Sept. 11th, 1793.

THE scheme* (which you may impart to my lady) is completely vanished, and I support the disappointment with heroic patience. Craufurd goes down to Chatsworth tomorrow, and Fox does not recommend my waiting for the event; yet the appointment is not yet declared, and I am ignorant of the name and merits of my successful competitor. Is it not wonderful that I am still in suspense, without a letter from Deyverdun? No, it is not wonderful, since no Flanders mail is arrived: tomorrow three will be due. I am therefore in a miserable state of doubt and anxiety; in a much better house indeed than my own, but without books, or business, or society. I send or call two or three times each day to Elmsly's, and can only say that I shall fly the next day, Saturday, Sunday, &c. after I have got my *quietus*. No news, except that we keep Negapatnam. The other day the French ambassador mentioned that the empress of Russia, a precious ——, had proposed to ratify the principles of the armed neutrality, by a definitive treaty; but that the French, obliging creatures! had declared, that they would neither propose nor accept an article so disagreeable to England. Grey Elliot was pleased with your attention, and says you are a perfect master of the subject.† Adieu. If I could be sure that no mail would arrive tomorrow, I would run down with my aunt. My heart is not light. I embrace my lady with true affection, but I need not repeat it.

* Of going as secretary to the embassy to Paris.

† Policy of Great Britain towards America.

No. CLI.

LORD LOUGHBOROUGH TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Bedford square, Sept 11, 1783.

THIS is not literally, but not far from it, the first time since I have attempted to write: when you did me the favour to call, I was less able to speak. My disorder, which, in substance, I believe was gout, assumed so different a form that it misled my medical friends; and in the puzzle I have suffered more, and been more seriously in danger, than I ever was. At present I recover sensibly, but very slowly; and I am to try, about the middle of the week, a very slow journey to Buxton.

Your letter was a real addition to my complaints at the time I received it, and I cannot yet bring myself to look at it with a healthy eye. Many selfish considerations mingle themselves with my judgment upon it, and, no doubt, bias my opinion. I extremely regret the loss of your society, which in a more settled state than the late times have afforded, I hoped to have enjoyed more frequently. I am confident that not only lord North, but some other friends of yours, who, if anything is permanent, would have found their consequence increase, never would have lost sight of your object. Absence delays and slackens the most active pursuits of one's friends, and though some of us will miss you too often to forget, we shall want to conjure you back again to remind others.

I shall beg the favour of lord Sheffield to do nothing about your seat without apprizing me. My state of health drives me as fast as I can to Buxton, and the moment I find myself re-established, a thousand cares will bring me back to London. I do not propose to be gone above a month, and I trust you will not have taken your departure before the 10th of next month, when I hope to see you.

I ever am, my dear sir, yours most sincerely,
LOUGHBOROUGH.

No. CLII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Dover, Wednesday, 17th Sept. 1783,
Ten o'clock in the morning.

THE best laws are useless without proper guardians. Your letter per Sunday's post is not arrived, (as its fate is uncertain and irrevocable, you must repeat any material article,) but that per Monday's post reached me last night. Oliver* is more insolent than his great-grandfather; but you will cope with one, and would not have been much afraid of the other. Last night the wind was so high, that the vessel could not stir from the harbour; this day it is brisk and fair. We are flattered with the hope of making Calais harbour by the same tide, in three hours and a half; but any delay will leave the disagreeable option of a tottering boat or a tossing night. What a cursed thing to live in an island! This step is more awkward than the whole journey. The triumvirate of this memorable embarkation will consist of the grand Gibbon, Henry Laurence, esq., President of Congress, and Mr secretary, colonel, admiral, philosopher, Thompson,† attended by three horses, who are not the most agreeable fellow-passengers. If we survive, I will finish and seal my letter at Calais. Our salvation shall be ascribed to the prayers of my lady and aunt; for I do believe they both pray.

Boulogne, Thursday morning, ten o'clock.

Instead of Calais, the wind has driven us to Boulogne, where we landed in the evening, without much

* Mr Oliver Cromwell, the only male descendant of the protector; a respectable solicitor, with whom I transacted some business on the part of Mr Gibbon; and why my friend denominates him proud I cannot guess. He was a very sensible pleasing gentleman. S.

† Now count Rumford.

noise and difficulty. The night is passed, the custom-house is dispatched, the post-horses are ordered, and I shall start about eleven o'clock. I had not the least symptom of sea-sickness, while my companions were spewing round me. Laurence has read the pamphlet,* and thinks it has done much mischief. A good sign! Adieu. The captain is impatient. I shall reach Lausanne by the end of next week, but may probably write on the road.

No. CLIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Langres, Sept. 23rd, 1783.

LET the geographical Maria place before you the map of France, and trace my progress as far as this place, through the following towns: Boulogne, (where I was forced to land,) St Omer, (where I recovered my road,) Aire, Bethune, Douay, Cambray, St Quintin, La Fere, Laon, Rheims, Chalons, St Dizier, and Langres, where I have just finished my supper. The inns, in general, more agreeable to the palate than to the sight or smell. But, with some short exceptions of time and place, I have enjoyed good weather and good roads; and at the end of the ninth day I feel so little fatigued, that the journey appears no more than a pleasant airing. I have generally conversed with Homer and lord Clarendon, often with Caplin and Muff;† sometimes with the French postillions, of the above-mentioned animals the least rational. Tomorrow I lie at Besançon, and, according to the arrangement of post or hired horses, shall either sup at Lausanne on Friday, or dine there Saturday. From Lausanne I will immediately write. It aunt Kitty's gratitude and good-breeding have not

* Lord Sheffield's Observations on the Commerce of the American States.

† His dog.

driven her away upon the first whisper of Brighton, she will share this intelligence; if she is gone, a line from you would be humane and attentive. Adieu. I am going into an excellent bed, about six feet high from the ground.

No. CLIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Lausanne, Sept. 30th, 1783.

I ARRIVED safe in harbour last Saturday, the 27th instant, about ten o'clock in the morning; but as the post only goes out twice a-week, it was not in my power to write before this day. Except one day, between Langres and Bensançon, which was laborious enough, I finished my easy and gentle airing without any fatigue, either of mind or body. I found Deyverdun well and happy, but much more happy at the sight of a friend, and the accomplishment of a scheme which he had so long and impatiently desired. His garden, terrace, and park, have even exceeded the most sanguine of my expectations and remembrances; and you yourself cannot have forgotten the charming prospect of the lake, the mountains, and the declivity of the Pays de Vaud. But as human life is perpetually chequered with good and evil, I have found some disappointments on my arrival. The easy nature of Deyverdun, his indolence, and his impatience, had prompted him to reckon too positively that his house would be vacant at Michaelmas; some unforeseen difficulties have arisen, or have been discovered when it was already too late; and the consummation of our hopes is (I am much afraid) postponed to next spring. At first I was knocked down by the unexpected thunderbolt, but I have gradually been reconciled to my fate, and have granted a free and gracious pardon to my friend. As his own apartment, which afforded me a temporary shelter, is much too narrow for a



settled residence, we hired for the winter a convenient ready-furnished apartment in the nearest part of the Rue de Bourg, whose back-door leads in three steps to the terrace and garden, as often as a tolerable day shall tempt us to enjoy their beauties; and this arrangement has even its advantage, of giving us time to deliberate and provide, before we enter on a larger and more regular establishment. But this is not the sum of my misfortunes; hear, and pity! The day after my arrival (Sunday) we had just finished a very temporary dinner, and intended to begin a round of visits on foot, *chapeau sous le bras*, when, most unfortunately, Deyverdun proposed to shew me something in the court: we boldly and successfully ascended a flight of stone steps, but in the descent I missed my footing, and strained, or sprained, my ankle in a painful manner. My old latent enemy, (I do not mean the Devil,) who is always on the watch, has made an ungenerous use of his advantage; and I much fear that my arrival at Lausanne will be marked with a fit of the gout, though it is quite unnecessary that the intelligence or suspicion should find its way to Bath. Yesterday afternoon I lay, or at least sat, in state, to receive visits; and at the same moment my room was filled with four different nations. The loudest of these nations was the single voice of the abbé Raynal, who, like your friend, has chosen this place for the asylum of freedom and history. His conversation, which might be very agreeable, is intolerably loud, peremptory, and insolent; and you would imagine that he alone was the monarch and legislator of the world. Adieu. I embrace my lady and the infants. With regard to the important transactions for which you are constituted plenipotentiary, I expect with some impatience, but with perfect confidence the result of your labours. You may remember what I mentioned of my conversation with Charles Fox about the place of minister at Berne. I have talked it over with Deyverdun, who does not

dislike the idea, provided this place was allowed to be my villa during at least two-thirds of the year; but for my part, I am sure that * * * * * are worth more than ministerial friendship and gratitude; so I am inclined to think, that they are preferable to an office which would be procured with difficulty, enjoyed with constraint and expense, and lost perhaps next April, in the annual revolutions of our domestic government. Again adieu.

No. CLV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, October 28th, 1783.

THE progress of my gout is in general so regular, and there is so much uniformity in the history of its decline and fall, that I have hitherto indulged my laziness without much shame or remorse, without supposing that you would be very anxious for my safety, which has been sufficiently provided for by the triple care of my friend Deyverdun, my humbler friend Caplin, and a very conversable physician, (not the famous Tissot,) whose ordinary fee is ten batz, about fifteen pence English. After the usual increase and decrease of the member (for it has been confined to the injured part) the gout has retired in good order, and the remains of weakness, which obliged me to move on the rugged pavement of Lausanne with a stick, or rather small crutch, are to be ascribed to the sprain, which might have been a much more serious business. As I have now spent a month at Lausanne, you will inquire with much curiosity, more kindness, and some mixture of spite and malignity, how far the place has answered my expectations, and whether I do not repent of a resolution which has appeared so rash and ridiculous to my ambitious friends? To this question, however natural and reasonable, I shall not return an immediate answer, for two reasons:—

A A

1. *I have not yet made a fair trial.* The disappointment and delay with regard to Deyverdun's house, will confine us this winter to lodgings rather convenient than spacious or plessant. I am only beginning to recover my strength and liberty, and to look about on persons and things; the greatest part of those persons are in the country, taken up with their vintage; my books are not yet arrived; and, in short, I cannot look upon myself as settled in that comfortable way which you and I understand and relish. Yet the weather has been heavenly, and till this time, the end of October, we enjoy the brightness of the sun, and somewhat gently complain of its immoderate heat.

2. If I should be too sanguine in explaining my satisfaction in what I have done, you would ascribe that satisfaction to the novelty of the scene, and the inconstancy of man; and I deem it far more safe and prudent to postpone any positive declaration, till I am placed by experience beyond the danger of repentance and recantation. Yet of one thing I am sure, that I possess in this country, as well as in England, the best cordial of life, a sincere, tender, and sensible friend, adorned with the most valuable and pleasant qualities both of the heart and head. The inferior enjoyments of leisure and society are likewise in my power; and in the short excursions which I have hitherto made, I have commenced or renewed my acquaintance with a certain number of persons, more especially women, (who, at least in France and this country, are undoubtedly superior to our prouder sex,) of rational minds and elegant manners. I breakfast alone, and have declared that I receive no visits in a morning, which you will easily suppose is devoted to study. I find it impossible, without inconvenience, to defer my dinner beyond two o'clock. We have got a very good woman cook. Deyverdun, who is somewhat of an Epicurean philosopher, understands the management of a table, and we frequently invite a guest or two to share our luxurious but not extra-

vagant repasts. The afternoons are (and will be much more so hereafter) devoted to society, and I shall find it necessary to play at cards much oftener than in London: but I do not dislike that way of passing a couple of hours, and I shall not be ruined at shilling whist. As yet I have not supped; but in the course of the winter I must sometimes sacrifice an evening abroad, and in exchange I hope sometimes to steal a day at home, without going into company.

I have all this time been talking to lord Sheffield; I hope that he has dispatched my affairs, and it would give me pleasure to hear that I am no longer member for Lymington, nor lord of Lenborough. Adieu. I feel every day that the distance serves only to make me think with more tenderness of the persons whom I love.

No. CLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, November 14th, 1783.

LAST Tuesday, November eleventh, after plaguing and vexing yourself all the morning about some business of your fertile creation, you went to the House of Commons, and passed the afternoon, the evening, and perhaps the night, without sleep or food, stifled in a close room by the heated respiration of six hundred politicians inflamed by party and passion, and tired of the repetition of dull nonsense, which in that illustrious assembly so far outweighs the proportion of reason and eloquence. On the same day, after a studious morning, a friendly dinner, and a cheerful assembly of both sexes, I retired to rest at eleven o'clock, satisfied with the past day, and certain that the next would afford me the return of the same quiet and rational enjoyments. *Which has the better bargain?*

Seriously, I am every hour more grateful to my own judgment and resolution, and only regret that I so long delayed the execution of a favourite plan, which I am convinced is the best adapted to my character and inclinations. Your conjecture of the revolutions of my face, when I heard that the House was for this winter inaccessible, is probable, but false. I bore my disappointment with the temper of a sage, and only use it to render the prospect of next year still more pleasing to my imagination. You are likewise mistaken in imputing my fall to the awkwardness of my limbs. The same accident might have happened to Slingsby himself, or to any *hero* of the age, the most distinguished for his *bodily activity*. I have now resumed my entire strength, and walk with caution, yet with speed and safety, through the streets of this mountainous city. After a month of the finest autumn I ever saw, the *bise** made me feel my old acquaintance: the weather is now milder, and this present day is dark and rainy, not much better than what you probably enjoy in England. The town is comparatively empty, but the noblesse are returning every day from their chateaux, and I already perceive that I shall have more reason to complain of dissipation than of dulness. As I told lady S., I am afraid of being too rash and hasty in expressing my satisfaction; but I must again repeat, that appearances are extremely favourable. I am sensible that general praise conveys no distinct ideas, but it is very difficult to enter into particulars where the individuals are unknown or indifferent to our correspondent. You have forgotten the *old* generation, and in twenty years a new one is grown up. Death has swept many from the world, and chance or choice has brought many to this place. If you inquire after your old acquaintance Catherine, you must be told, that she is solitary,

* The north-east wind.

ugly, blind, and universally forgotten. Your later flame, and our goddess, the Eliza,* passed a month at the inn. She came to consult Tissot, and was acquainted with Cerjat. And now to business. * *

With regard to meaner cases, there are two which you can and will undertake. 1. As I have not renounced my country, I should be glad to hear of your parliamentary squabbles, which may be done with small trouble and expense. After an interesting debate, my lady in due time may cut the speeches from Woodfall. You will write or dictate any curious anecdote, and the whole, inclosed in a letter, may be dispatched to Lausanne. 2. A set of Wedgewood china, which we talked of in London, and which would be most acceptable here. As you have a *sort* of a taste, I leave to your own choice the colour and the pattern; but as I have the inclination and means to live very handsomely *here*, I desire that the size and number of things may be adequate to a plentiful table. If you see lord North, assure him of my gratitude; had he been a more successful friend, I should now be drudging at the Board of Customs, or vexed with business in the amiable society of ———. To lord Loughborough present an affectionate sentiment; I am satisfied of his intention to serve me, if I had not been in such a fidget. I am sure you will not fail, while you are in town, to visit and comfort poor aunt Kitty. I wrote to her on my first arrival, and she may be assured that I will not neglect her. To my lady I say nothing; we have now our private correspondence, into which the eye of an husband should not be permitted to intrude. I am really satisfied with the success of the pamphlet;† not only because I have a sneaking kindness for the author, but as it shews me that plain sense, full in-

* Lady Elizabeth Foster, now duchess of Devonshire.

† Observations on the Commerce with the American States.

formation, and warm spirit, are still acceptable in the world. You talk of Lausanne as a place of retirement; yet, from the situation and freedom of the Pays de Vaud, all nations, and all extraordinary characters, are astonished to meet each other there. The abbé Raynal, the grand Gibbon, and Mercier, author of the *Tableau de Paris*, have been in the same room. The other day the prince and princess de Ligne, the duke and duchess d'Ursel, &c., came from Brussels on purpose (literally true) to act a comedy at * * * * *, in the country. He was dying, and could not appear; but we had comedy, ball, and supper. The event seems to have revived him; for that great man is fallen from his ancient glory, and his nearest relations refuse to see him. I told you of poor Catherine's deplorable state; but madame de Mesery, at the age of sixty-nine, is still handsome. Adieu.

No. CLVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, December 20th, 1783.

I HAVE received both your epistles; and as any excuse will serve a man who is at the same time very busy and very idle, I patiently expected the second, before I entertained any thoughts of answering the first. * * * * * I therefore conclude that, on every principle of common sense, before this moment your active zeal has already expelled me from the House, to which, without regret, I bid an everlasting farewell. The agreeable hour of five o'clock in the morning, at which you commonly retire, does not tend to revive my attachment; but if you add the soft hours of your morning committee,* in the discussion of taxes, customs, frauds, smugglers,

* A select committee for inquiring into frauds committed in respect to the revenue.

&c., I think I should beg to be released, and quietly sent to the galleys as a place of leisure and freedom. Yet I do not depart from my general principles of toleration. Some animals are made to live in the water, others on the earth, many in the air; and some, as it is now believed, even in fire. Your present hurry of parliament I perfectly understand; when opposition make the attack,

— Horæ

Momento cita mors venit, aut victoria læta.

But when the minister brings forward any strong and decisive measure, he at length prevails; but his progress is retarded at every step, and in every stage of the bill by a pertinacious though unsuccessful minority. I am not sorry to hear of the splendour of Fox; I am proud, in a foreign country, of his fame and abilities, and our little animosities are extinguished by my retreat from the English stage. With regard to the substance of the business, I scarcely know what to think: the vices of the Company,* both in their persons and their constitution, were manifold and manifest; the danger was imminent, and such an empire, with thirty millions of subjects, was not to be lost for trifles. Yet, on the other hand, the faith of charters, the rights of property! I hesitate and tremble. Such an innovation would at least require that the remedy should be as certain as the evil, and the proprietors may perhaps insinuate, that *they* were as competent guardians of their own affairs, as either * * * or * * * * *. Their acting without a salary seems childish, and their not being removable by the crown is a strange and dangerous precedent. But enough of politics, which I now begin to view through a thin, cold, distant cloud, yet not without a reasonable degree of curiosity and pa-

* East India Company.

triotism. From the papers (especially when you add an occasional slice of the Chronicle) I shall be amply informed of facts and debates. From you I expect the causes rather than the events, the true springs of action, and those interesting anecdotes which seldom ascend the garret of a Fleet street editor. You say that many friends (alias acquaintance) have expressed curiosity and concern ;—I should not wish to be immediately forgotten ;—that others (you once mentioned Gerard Hamilton) condemn government for suffering the departure of a man who might have done them some credit and some service, perhaps as much as * * * himself. To you, in the confidence of friendship, and without either pride or resentment, I will fairly own that I am somewhat of Gerard's opinion ; and if I did not compare it with the rest of his character, I should be astonished that * * * suffered me to depart without even a civil answer to my letter. Were I capable of hating a man whom it is not easy to hate, I should find myself amply revenged by * * *. But the happy souls in Paradise are susceptible only of love and pity ; and though Lausanne is not a Paradise, more especially in winter, I do assure you, in sober prose, that it has hitherto fulfilled, and even surpassed, my warmest expectation. Yet I often cast a look toward Sheffield place, where you now repose, if you can repose, during the Christmas recess. Embrace my lady, the young baroness, and the gentle Louisa, and insinuate to your silent consort, that separate letters require separate answers. Had I an air balloon, the great topic of modern conversation, I would call upon you till the meeting of parliament. *Vale.*

No. CLVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS PORTEN.

DEAR MADAM,

Lausanne, Dec. 27th, 1783.

THE unfortunate are loud and loquacious in their complaints, but real happiness is content with its own silent enjoyment; and if that happiness is of a quiet uniform kind, we suffer days and weeks to elapse without communicating our sensations to a distant friend. By you therefore, whose temper and understanding have extracted from human life on every occasion the best and most comfortable ingredients, my silence will always be interpreted as an evidence of content, and you would only be alarmed (the danger is not at hand) by the too frequent repetition of my letters. Perhaps I should have continued to slumber, I don't know how long, had I not been awakened by the anxiety which you express in your last letter. * * * * *

In speaking of the happiness which I enjoy, you will agree with me in giving the preference to a sincere and sensible friend; and though you cannot discern the full extent of his merit, you will easily believe that Deyverdun is the man. Perhaps two persons so perfectly fitted to live together were never formed by nature and education. We have both read and seen a great variety of objects; the lights and shades of our different characters are happily blended; and a friendship of thirty years has taught us to enjoy our mutual advantages, and to support our unavoidable imperfections. In love and marriage some harsh sounds will sometimes interrupt the harmony, and in the course of time, like our neighbours, we must expect some disagreeable moments; but confidence and freedom are the two pillars of our union, and I am much mistaken if the building be not solid and comfortable. In this season I rise (not at four in

the morning) but a little before eight ; at nine, I am called from my study to breakfast, which I always perform alone in the English style ; and, with the aid of Caplin,* I perceive no difference between Lausanne and Bentinck street. Our mornings are usually passed in separate studies ; we never approach each other's door without a previous message, or thrice knocking ; and my apartment is already sacred and formidable to strangers. I dress at half past one, and at two (an early hour, to which I am not perfectly reconciled) we sit down to dinner. After dinner and the departure of our company, one, two, or three friends, we read together some amusing book, or play at chess, or retire to our rooms, or make visits, or go to the coffee-house. Between six and seven the assemblies begin, and I am oppressed only with their number and variety. Whist, at shillings or half-crowns, is the game I generally play, and I play three rubbers with pleasure. Between nine and ten we withdraw to our bread and cheese, and friendly converse, which sends us to bed at eleven ; but these sober hours are too often interrupted by private or numerous suppers, which I have not the courage to resist, though I practise a laudable abstinence at the best furnished tables. Such is the skeleton of my life ; it is impossible to communicate a perfect idea of the vital and substantial parts, the characters of the men and women with whom I have very easily connected myself in looser and closer bonds, according to their inclination and my own. If I do not deceive myself, and if Deyverdun does not flatter me, I am already a general favourite ; and as our likings and dislikings are commonly mutual, I am equally satisfied with the freedom and elegance of manners, and (after proper allowances and exceptions) with the worthy and amiable qualities, of many individuals. The autumn has been beautiful, and the winter hitherto mild, but in

* His English valet de chambre.

January we must expect some severe frost. Instead of rolling in a coach, I walk the streets, wrapped up in a fur cloak; but this exercise is wholesome, and except an accidental fit of the gout of a few days, I never enjoyed better health. I am no longer in Pavillard's house, where I was almost starved with cold and hunger; and you may be assured that I now enjoy every benefit of comfort, plenty, and even decent luxury. You wish me happy; acknowledge that such a life is more conducive to happiness than five nights in the week passed in the House of Commons, or five mornings spent at the Custom-house. Send me, in return, a fair account of your own situation in mind and body. I am satisfied your own good sense would have reconciled you to inevitable separation; but there never was a more suitable diversion than your visit to Sheffield place. Among the innumerable proofs of friendship which I have received from that family, there are none which affect me more sensibly than their kind civilities to you, though I am persuaded that they are at least as much on your account as on mine. At length madame de ***** is delivered by her tyrant's death; her daughter, a valuable woman of this place, has made some inquiries; and though her own circumstances are narrow, she will not suffer her father's widow to be left totally destitute. I am glad you derived so much melancholy pleasure from the letters; yet, had I known it, I should have withheld * * * * *

No. CLIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, January 24th, 1784.

WITHIN two or three days after your last *gracious* epistle, your complaints were silenced, and your inquiries were satisfied, by an ample dispatch of four

pages, which overflowed the inside of the cover, and in which I exposed my opinion of things in general, public as well as private, as they existed in my mind, in my state of ignorance and error, about the eighteenth or twentieth of last month. Within a week after that date I epistolized, in the same rich and copious strain, the two venerable females of New-man street and Bath, whose murmurings must now be changed into songs of gratitude and applause. My correspondence with the holy matron of Northamptonshire has been less lively and loquacious. You have not forgotten the author's vindication of himself from the foul calumnies of pretended Christians. Within a fortnight after his arrival at Lausanne, he communicated the joyful event to Mrs Esther Gibbon. She answered, per return of post, both letters at the same time, and in very dutiful language, almost excusing her advice, which was intended for my spiritual as well as temporal good, and assuring me that *nobody should be able to injure me with her*. Unless the saint is an hypocrite, such an expression must convey a favourable and important meaning. At all events, it is worth giving *ourselves* some trouble about her, without indulging any sanguine expectations of inheritance. So much for my females; with regard to my male correspondents, you are the only one to whom I have given any signs of my existence, though I have formed many a generous resolution. Yet I am not insensible of the kind and friendly manner in which lord Loughborough has distinguished me. He could have no inducements of interest; and now that I view the distant picture with impartial eyes, I am convinced that (for a statesman) he was sincere in his wishes to serve me. When you see *him*, the Paynes, Eden, Craufurd, &c. tell them that I am well, happy, and ashamed. On your side, the zeal and diligence of your pen has surprised and delighted me, and your letters, at this interesting moment, are exactly such as I wished them to be—authentic anec-

dotes, and rational speculations, worthy of a man who acts a part in the great theatre, and who fills a seat, not only in the general Pandæmonium, but in the private council of the princes of the infernal regions. With regard to the detail of parliamentary operations, I must repeat my request to you, or rather to my lady, who will now be on the spot, that she will write, not with her pen, but with her scissars; and that after every debate which deserves to pass the sea and the mountains, she will dissect the faithful narrative of Woodfall, and send it off by the next post, as an agreeable supplement to the meagre accounts of our weekly papers. The wonderful revolutions of last month have sounded to my ear more like the shifting scenes of a comedy, or comic opera, than like the sober events of real and modern history; and the irregularity of our winter posts, which sometimes retarded, and sometimes hastened, the arrival of the dispatches, has increased the confusion of our ideas. Surely the Lord has blinded the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants; the obstinacy of last spring was nothing compared to the headstrong and headlong madness of this winter. I expect with much impatience the first days of your meeting; the purity and integrity of the coalition will suffer a fiery trial; but if they are true to themselves and to each other, a majority of the House of Commons must prevail, the rebellion of the young gentlemen will be crushed, and the masters will resume the government of the school. After the address and answer, I have no conception that parliament can be dissolved during the session; but if the present ministry can outlive the storm, I think the death-warrant will infallibly be signed in the summer. *Here* I blush for my country, without confessing her shame. Fox acted like a man of honour, yet surely his union with Pitt affords the only hope of salvation. How miserably are we wasting the season of peace!

I have written three pages before I come to my own business and feelings. * * * * *

No. CLX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

BARON !

Lausanne, February 2nd, 1784.

AFTER my last enormous dispatch, nothing can remain except some small gleanings or occasional hints : and thus in order : I am not conscious that any of your valuable MSS. have miscarried, or that I have omitted to answer any essential particulars. They stand in my bureau, carefully arranged and docketed under the following dates : September twenty-three, October twenty-three, November eighteen, December two, December fifteen, December nineteen, December twenty-three, December twenty-nine, January sixteen, which last I received this day, February second. For greater perspicuity, it will not be amiss (on either side) to number our future epistles by a conspicuous Roman character inscribed in the front, to which we may at any time refer. But instead of writing by Ostend, the shorter and surer way, especially on all occasions that deserve celerity, will be to inclose them to my banker, M. de Lessart at Paris, who will forward them to me. Through Germany the passage by sea is more uncertain, the roads worse, and the distance greater : we often complain of delay and irregularity at this interesting moment. By your last I find that you have boldly and generously opened a treaty with the enemy, which I proposed with fear and hesitation. I impatiently expect the result ; and again repeat, that *whatever* you can obtain for * * * * I shall consider it as so much saved out of the fire, &c. &c. Do you remember Dunning's motion (in the year 1780) to address the crown against a dissolution of parliament—a simple

address we rejected as an infringement on the prerogative? Yet how far short of these strong democratical measures, for which you have probably voted, as I should probably have done : such is the contagion of party ! Fox drives most furiously, yet I should not be surprised if Pitt's moderation and character should insensibly win the nation, and even the House, to espouse his cause, * * * * *

Unless when I look back on England with a selfish or a tender regard, my hours roll away very pleasantly, and I can again repeat with truth, that I have not regretted one single moment the step which I have taken. We are now at the height of the winter dissipation, and I am peculiarly happy when I can steal away from great assemblies, and suppers of twenty or thirty people, to a more private party of some of those persons whom I begin to call my friends. Till we are settled in our house, little can be expected on our side ; yet I have already given two or three handsome dinners ; and though everything is grown dearer, I am not alarmed at the general view of my expense. Deyverdun salutes you ; and we are agreed that few married couples are better entitled to the flitch of bacon than we shall be at the end of the year. When I had written about half this epistle, my books arrived : at our first meeting all was rapture and confusion, and two or three posts, from the second to this day, the fourteenth, have been suffered to depart unnoticed. Your letter of the twenty-seventh of January, which was not received till yesterday, has again awakened me, and I thought the surest way would be to send off this single sheet without any further delay.

I sincerely rejoice in the stability of parliament ;* and the first faint dawn of reconciliation, which must however be effected by the equal balance of parties,

* This supposition was founded on Mr Banks's declaration in the name of Mr Pitt.

rather than by the wisdom of the country gentlemen.*
 My Lady!—But it would be highly incongruous to
 begin my letter at the bottom of the page. Adieu
 therefore till next post.

No. CLXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, May 11th, 1784.

ALAS! alas! alas! We may now exchange our mutual condolence. Last Christmas, on the change of administration, I was struck with the thunderbolt of the unexpected event, and in the approaching dissolution I foresaw the loss of * * * * *
 The long continuance and various changes of the tempest rendered me by degrees callous and insensible; when the art of the mariners was exhausted, I felt that we were sinking, I expected the ship to founder; and when the fatal moment arrived, I was even pleased to be delivered from hope and fear to the calmness of despair. I now turn my eyes, not on the past, but on the present and the future; what is lost I try to consider as if it never had existed; and every day I congratulate my own good fortune, let me say my prudence and resolution, in migrating from your noisy stage to a scene of repose and content. But even in this separate state I was still anxious for my friend upon English earth, and at first was much delighted with your hint that you were setting off for Coventry without any prospect of an opposition. Every post, Wednesdays and Saturdays, I eagerly looked for the intelligence of your victory; and in spite of my misbehaviour, which I do not deny, I must abuse *my lady*, rather than you, for leaving me in so painful a situation. Each day raised and increased my apprehension; the *Courier de l'Europe*

* At the St Alban's tavern.

first announced the contest, the English papers proclaimed your defeat, and your last letter, which I received four days ago, shewed me that you exerted first the spirit, and at last the temper, of an hero. I am not much surprised that you should have been swept away in the general unpopularity, since even in this quiet place your friends are considered as a factious crew, acting in direct opposition both to the king and people. For myself, I am at a loss what to say. If this repulse should teach you to renounce all connection with kings and ministers, and patriots, and parties, and parliaments—for all of which you are by many degrees too honest—I should exclaim, with Teague of respectable memory, “By my soul, dear joy, you have *gained* a loss.” Private life, whether contemplative or active, has surely more solid and independent charms; you have *some* domestic comforts; Sheffield place is still susceptible of useful and ornamental improvements, (alas! how much better might even the last pounds have been laid out!)—and if these cares are not sufficient to occupy your leisure, I can trust your restless and enterprising spirit to find new methods to preserve you from the insipidity of repose. But I much fear your discontent and regret at being excluded from that Pandæmonium which we have so often cursed as long as you were obliged to attend it. The leaders of the party will flatter you with the opinion of their friendship and your own importance; the warmth of your temper makes you credulous and unsuspicious; and, like the rest of our species, male and female, you are not absolutely deaf to the voice of praise. Some other place will be suggested, easy, honourable, certain, where nothing is wanted but a man of character and spirit to head a superior interest; the opposition, if any, is contemptible, and the expense cannot be large. You will go down, find almost every circumstance falsely stated, repent that you had engaged yourself; but you cannot desert those friends who are firmly attached to your

cause; besides, the money you have already spent would have been thrown away; another thousand will complete the business: deeper and deeper will you plunge, and the last evil will be worse than the first. You see I am a free-spoken counsellor; may I not be a true prophet! Did I consult my own wishes, I should observe to you that, as you are no longer a slave, you might soon be transported, as you seem to desire, to one of the Alpine hills. The purity and calmness of the air is the best calculated to allay the heat of a political fever; the education of the two princesses might be successfully conducted under your eye and that of my lady; and if you had resolution to determine on a residence, not a visit, at Lausanne, your worldly affairs might repose themselves after their late fatigues. But you know that I am a friend to toleration, and am always disposed to make the largest allowance for the different natures of animals; a lion and a lamb, an eagle and a worm. I am afraid we are too quiet for you; here it would not be easy for you to create any business; you have for some time neglected books, and I doubt whether you would not think our suppers and assemblies somewhat trifling and insipid. You are far more difficult than I am; you are in search of information, and you are not content with your company, unless you can derive from them information or extraordinary amusement. For my part, I like to draw knowledge from books, and I am satisfied with polite attention and easy manners. Finally, I am happy to tell, and you will be happy to hear, that this place has in every respect exceeded my best and most sanguine hopes. How often have you said, as often as I expressed any ill-humour against the hurry, the expense, and the precarious condition, of my London life, "Ay, that is a nonsensical scheme of retiring to Lausanne that you have got into your head; a pretty fancy; you remember how much you liked it in your youth, but you have now seen more of the world, and if you were to

try it again, you would find yourself woefully disappointed." I had it in my head, in my heart; I have tried it; I have not been disappointed; and my knowledge of the world has served only to convince me, that a capital and a crowd may contain much less real society than the small circle of this gentle retirement. The winter has been longer, but, as far as I can learn, less rigorous than in the rest of Europe. The spring is now bursting upon us, and in our own garden it is displayed in all its glory. I already occupy a temporary apartment, and we live in the lower part of the house; before you receive this we shall be in full possession. We have much to enjoy and something to do, which I take to be the happiest condition of human life. Now for business, the kind of subject which I always undertake with the most reluctance, and leave with the most pleasure.

* * * * *

Adieu.

And now, my Lady,

Let me approach your gentle, not grimalkin, presence, with deep remorse. You have indirectly been informed of my state of mind and body; (the whole winter I have not had the slightest return of the gout, or any other complaint whatsoever;) you have been apprised, and are now apprised, of my motions, or rather of my perfect and agreeable repose; yet I must confess (and I *feel*) that something of a direct and personal exchange of sentiment has been neglected on my side, though I still *persuade* myself that when I am settled in my new house I shall have more subject, as well as leisure, to write. Such tricks of laziness your active spirit is a stranger to, though Mrs * * * * complains that she has never had an answer to her last letters. Poor lady Pembroke! *you* will feel for her! After a cruel alternative of hope and fear, her only daughter, lady Charlotte, died at *Aix en Provence*; they have persuaded her to

come to this place, where she is intimately connected with the Cerjat family. She has taken an agreeable house, about three miles from the town, and lives retired. I have seen her; her behaviour is calm, but her affliction ———. I accept with gratitude your friendly proposal of Wedgewood's ware, and should be glad to have it bought and packed, and sent without delay through Germany; and I shall only say, that I wish to have a very complete service for two courses and a dessert, and that our suppers are numerous, frequently fifteen or twenty persons. Adieu. I do not mean this as your letter. You are very good to poor Kitty. With you I do not condole about Coventry.

No. CLXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

Lausanne, May 28th, 1784.

I BEGIN without preface or apology, as if I had received your letter by the last post. In my own defence I know not what to say; but if I were disposed to recriminate, I might observe that you yourself are not perfectly free from the sin of laziness and procrastination. I have often wondered why we are not fonder of letter-writing. We all delight to talk of ourselves, and it is only in letters, in writing to a friend, that we can enjoy that conversation, not only without reproach or interruption, but with the highest propriety and mutual satisfaction; sure that the person whom we address feels an equal or at least a strong and lively interest in the consideration of the pleasing subject. On the subject therefore of *self* I will entertain a friend to whom none of my thoughts or actions, none of my pains or pleasures, can ever be indifferent. When I first cherished the design of retiring to Lausanne, I was much more apprehensive of wounding your tender attachment than of offending lord Sheffield's manly and vehement friendship. In

the abolition of the Board of Trade the motives for my retreat became more urgent and forcible; I wished to break loose, yet I delayed above a year before I could take my final resolution; and the letter in which I disclosed it to you cost me one of the most painful struggles of my life. As soon as I had conquered that difficulty, all meaner obstacles fell before me, and in a few weeks I found myself at Lausanne, astonished at my firmness and my success. Perhaps you still blame or still lament the step which I have taken. If on your own account, I can only sympathize with your feelings, the recollection of which often costs me a sigh: if on mine, let me fairly state what I have escaped in England, and what I have found at Lausanne. Recollect the tempests of this winter; how many anxious days I should have passed, how many noisy, turbulent, hot, unwholesome nights, while my political existence, and that of my friends, was at stake; yet these feeble efforts were unavailing; I should have lost my seat in parliament, and after the extraordinary expense of another year, I must still have pursued the road to Switzerland, unless I had been tempted by some selfish patron, or by lord S.'s aspiring spirit, to incur a most inconvenient expense for a new seat, and once more, at the beginning of an opposition, to engage in new scenes of business. As to the immediate prospect of anything like a quiet and profitable retreat, I should not know where to look; my friends are no longer in power. With * * * * and his party I have no connection; and were he disposed to favour a man of letters, it is difficult to say what he could give, or what I would accept; the reign of pensions and sinecures is at an end, and a commission in the Excise or Customs, the summit of my hopes, would give me income at the expense of leisure and liberty. When I revolve these circumstances in my mind, my only regret, I repeat it again and again, is, that I did not embrace this salutary measure three, five, ten years ago. Thus much I

thought it necessary to say, and shall now dismiss this unpleasing part of the subject. For my situation here, health is the first consideration; and on that head your tenderness had conceived some degree of anxiety. I know not whether it has reached you that I had a fit of the gout the day after my arrival. The deed is true, but the cause was accidental; carelessly stepping down a flight of stairs, I sprained my ankle; and my ungenerous enemy instantly took advantage of my weakness. But since my breaking that double chain, I have enjoyed a winter of the most perfect health that I have perhaps ever known, without any mixture of the little flying incommodities which in my best days have sometimes disturbed the tranquillity of my English life. You are not ignorant of Dr Tissot's reputation, and his merit is even above his reputation. He assures me that, in his opinion, the moisture of England and Holland is most pernicious, the dry, pure air of Switzerland most favourable, to a gouty constitution; that experience justifies the theory; and that there are fewer martyrs of that disorder in this than in any other country in Europe. This winter has everywhere been most uncommonly severe, and you seem in England to have had your full share of the general hardship: but in this corner, surrounded by the Alps, it has rather been long than rigorous; and its duration stole away our spring, and left us no interval between furs and silks. We now enjoy the genial influence of the climate and the season; and no station was ever more calculated to enjoy them than Deyverdun's house and garden, which are now become my own. You will not expect that the pen should describe what the pencil would imperfectly delineate. A few circumstances may however be mentioned. My library is about the same size with that of Bentinck street, with this difference, however, that instead of looking on a paved court, twelve feet square, I command a boundless prospect of vale, mountain, and water, from my three windows. My

apartment is completed by a spacious light closet or store-room, with a bed-chamber and dressing-room. Deyverdun's habitation is pleasant and convenient, though less extensive; for our common use we have a very handsome winter apartment of four rooms; and on the ground-floor, two cool saloons for the summer, with a sufficiency or rather superfluity of offices, &c. A terrace, one hundred yards long, extends beyond the front of the house, and leads to a close impenetrable shrubbery; and from thence the circuit of a long and various walk carries me round a meadow and vineyard. The intervals afford abundant supply of fruit, and every sort of vegetables; and if you add, that this villa (which has been much ornamented by my friend) touches the best and most sociable part of the town, you will agree with me that few persons, either princes or philosophers, enjoy a more desirable residence. Deyverdun, who is proud of his own works, often walks me round, pointing out, with acknowledgment and enthusiasm, the beauties that change with every step and with every variation of light. I share, or at least I sympathize with his pleasure. He appears contented with my progress, and has already told several people that he does not despair of making me a gardener. Be that as it may, you will be glad to hear that I am, by my own choice, infinitely more in motion, and in the open air, than I ever have been formerly; yet my perfect liberty and leisure leave me many studious hours; and as the circle of our acquaintance retire into the country, I shall be much less engaged in company and diversion. I have seriously resumed the prosecution of my History; each day and each month adds something to the completion of the great work. The progress is slow, the labour continual, and the end remote and uncertain; yet every day brings its amusement, as well as labour; and though I dare not fix a term, even in my own fancy, I advance with the pleasing reflection, that the business of publication (should I be

detained here so long) must enforce my return to England, and restore me to the best of mothers and friends. In the meanwhile, with health and competence, a full independence of mind and action, a delightful habitation, a true friend, and many pleasant acquaintance; you will allow that I am rather an object of envy than of pity; and if you were conversant with the use of the French language, I would seriously propose to you to repose yourself with us in this fine country. My indirect intelligence (on which I sometimes depend with more implicit faith than on the kind dissimulation of your friendship) gives me reason to hope that the last winter has been more favourable to your health than the preceding one. Assure me of it yourself honestly and truly, and you will afford me one of the most lively pleasures.

No. CLXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, October 18th, 1784.

SINCE my retreat to Lausanne our correspondence has never received so long an interruption; and as I have been equally taciturn with the rest of the English world, it may now be a problem among that sceptical nation, whether the Historian of the Decline and Fall be a living substance or an empty name. So tremendous is the sleepy power of laziness and habit, that the silence of each post operated still more strongly to benumb the hand, and to freeze the *epistolary* ink. How or when I should have naturally awakened, I cannot tell; but the pressure of my affairs, and the arrival of your last letter, compel me to remember that you are entrusted with the final amputation of the best limb of my property. The subject is in itself so painful, that I have postponed it, like a child's physic, from day to day; and losing

whole mornings, as I walked about my library, in useless regret and impotent resolution, you will be amazed to hear that (after peeping to see if you are all well, and returned from Ireland) I have not yet had the courage to peruse your letter, for fear of meeting with some gloomy intelligence; and I will now finish what I have to say of pecuniary matters, before I know whether its contents will fortify or overthrow my unbiassed sentiments.

* * * * * To what purpose (will you say) are these tardy and useless repinings? To arraign your manager? No; I am satisfied with the skill and firmness of the pilot, and complain only of the untoward violence of the tempest. To repent of your retreat into Switzerland? No, surely; every subsequent event has tended to make it as necessary as it has proved agreeable. Why then these lamentations? Hear and attend—it is to interest (if possible more strongly) your zeal and friendship; to justify a sort of avarice, a love of money, very foreign to my character, but with which I cling to these last fragments of my fortune. * * * * *

* * * * * As far as I can judge from the experience of a year, though I find Lausanne much more expensive than I imagined, yet my style of living (and a very handsome style it is) will be brought *nearly* within my ordinary revenues. I wish our poor country could say as much! But it was always my favourite and rational wish, that at the winding up of my affairs I might possess a sum, from one to two thousand pounds, neither buried in land, nor locked up in the funds, but free, light, and ready to obey any call of interest, or pleasure, or virtue; to defray any extraordinary expense, support any delay, or remove any obstacle. For the attainment of this object, I trust in your assistance. * * * * *

* * * * * Thus much for this money transaction; to you I need add no other stimulative

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than to say that my ease and comfort very much depend on the success of this plan.

As I thought every man of sense and fortune in Ireland must be satisfied, I did not conceive the cloud so dark as you represent it. I will seriously peruse the new edition of your work; it would become a classic book, if you could find leisure (will you ever find it?) to introduce order and ornament. You must negotiate *directly* with Deyverdun; but the state will not hear of parting with their only Reynolds.* I embrace my lady; let her be angry, provided she be well. Adieu. Yours.

P.S. The care of Ireland may have amused you in the summer; but how do you mean to employ the winter? Do you not cast a longing, lingering look at St Stephen's chapel? With your fiery spirit, and firm judgment, I almost wish you there; not for your benefit, but for the public. If you resolve to recover your seat, do not listen to any fallacious and infinite projects of interest, contest, return, petition, &c., but limit your expense.

No. CLXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, October 22nd, 1784.

A FEW weeks ago, as I was walking on our terrace with M. Tissot, the celebrated physician; M. Mercier, the author of the *Tableau de Paris*; the abbé Raynal; monsieur, madame, and mademoiselle Necker; the abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Louis the Fifteenth; the hereditary prince of Brunswick; prince Henry of Prussia; and a dozen counts, barons, and extraordinary persons, among whom was a natural son of the

* Alluding to his portrait.

empress of Russia—Are you satisfied with this list? which I could enlarge and embellish, without departing from truth; and was not the baron of Sheffield (profound as he is on the subject of the American trade) doubly mistaken with regard to Gibbon and Lausanne? Whenever I used to hint my design of retiring, that illustrious baron, after a proper effusion of d——d fools, condescended to observe, that such an obscure nook in Switzerland might please me in the ignorance of youth, but that after tasting for so many years the various society of Paris and London, I should soon be tired with the dull and uniform round of a provincial town. In the winter Lausanne is indeed reduced to its native powers; but during the summer it is possibly, after Spa, one of the most favourite places of general resort. The tour of Switzerland, the Alps, and the Glaciers, is become a fashion. Tissot attracts the invalids, especially from France; and a colony of English have taken up the habit of spending their winters at Nice, and their summers in the Pays de Vaud. Such are the splendour and variety of our summer visitors; and *you* will agree with me more readily than the baron, when I say that this variety, instead of being a merit, is, in my opinion, one of the very few objections to the residence of Lausanne. After the dissipation of the winter, I expected to have enjoyed, with more freedom and solitude, myself, my friend, my books, and this delicious paradise; but my position and character make me here a sort of a public character, and oblige me to see and be seen. However, it is my firm resolution for next summer to assume the independence of a philosopher, and to be visible only to the persons whom I like. On that principle I should not, most assuredly, have avoided the Neckers and prince Henry. The former have purchased the barony of Copet near Geneva; and as the buildings were very much out of repair, they passed this summer at a country-house at the gates of Lausanne. They afford a new example,

that persons who have tasted of greatness can seldom return with pleasure to a private station. In the moments when we were alone he conversed with me freely, and I believe truly, on the subject of his administration and fall; and has opened several passages of modern history which would make a very good figure in *the American book*.* If they spent the summers at the castle of Copet, about nine leagues from hence, a fortnight or three weeks visit would be a pleasant and healthful excursion; but, alas! I fear there is little appearance of its being executed. *Her* health is impaired by the agitation of her mind: instead of returning to Paris, she is ordered to pass the winter in the southern provinces of France; and our last parting was solemn, as I very much doubt whether I shall ever see her again. They have now a very troublesome charge, which you will experience in a few years, the disposal of a baroness; mademoiselle Necker,† one of the greatest heiresses in Europe, is now about eighteen, wild, vain, but good-natured, and with a much larger provision of wit than of beauty: what increases their difficulties is their religious obstinacy of marrying her only to a Protestant. It would be an excellent opportunity for a young Englishman of a great name and a fair reputation. Prince Henry must be a man of sense; for he took more notice, and expressed more esteem for me than anybody else. He is certainly (without touching his military character) a very lively and entertaining companion. He talked with freedom, and generally with contempt, of most of the princes of Europe; with respect of the empress of Russia; but never mentioned the name of his brother, except once, when he hinted that it was *he himself* that won the battle of Rosbach. His nephew, and our nephew, the here-

* Observations on the Commerce with the American States.

† Now madame de Staël.

ditary prince of Brunswick, is here for his education. Of the English, who live very much as a national colony, you will like to hear of Mrs Fraser and *one* more. Donna Catherina* pleases everybody by the perfect simplicity of her state of nature. You know she has had resolution to return from England (where she told me she saw you) to Lausanne, for the sake of Miss Bristow, who is in bad health; and in a few days they set off for Nice. *The other* is the Eliza; she passed through Lausanne, in her road from Italy to England; poorly in health, but still adorable, (nay, do not frown!) and I enjoyed some delightful hours by her bed-side. She wrote me a line from Paris, but has not executed her promise of visiting Lausanne in the month of October. My pen has run much faster, and much farther, than I intended on the subject of others; yet, in describing them, I have thrown some light over myself and my situation. A year, a very short one, has now elapsed since my arrival at Lausanne; and after a cool review of my sentiments, I can sincerely declare that I have never during a single moment repented of having executed my *absurd* project of retiring to Lausanne. It is needless to dwell on the fatigue, the hurry, the vexation, which I must have felt in the narrow and dirty circle of English politics. My present life wants no foil, and shines by its own native light. The chosen part of my library is now arrived, and arranged in a room full as good as that in Bentinck street, with this difference indeed, that instead of looking on a stone court, twelve feet square, I command, from three windows of plate-glass, an unbounded prospect of many a league of vineyard, of fields, of wood, of lake, and of mountains; a scene which lord Sheffield will tell you is superior to all you can imagine. The climate, though severe in winter, has perfectly agreed with my constitution, and the year is accomplished

* The honourable Mrs Fraser.

without any return of the gout. An excellent house, a good table, a pleasant garden, are no contemptible ingredients in human happiness. The general style of society hits my fancy; I have cultivated a large and agreeable circle of acquaintance, and I am much deceived if I have not laid the foundations of two or three more intimate and valuable connections; but their names would be indifferent, and it would require pages, or rather volumes, to describe their persons and characters. With regard to my standing dish, my domestic friend, I could not be much disappointed, after an intimacy of eight-and-twenty years. His heart and his head are excellent; he has the warmest attachment for me, he is satisfied that I have the same for him: some slight imperfections must be mutually supported; two bachelors, who have lived so long alone and independent, have their peculiar fancies and humours; and when the mask of form and ceremony is laid aside, every moment in a family life has not the sweetness of the honey-moon, even between the husbands and wives who have the truest and most tender regard for each other. Should you be very much surprised to hear of my being married? Amazing as it may seem, I do assure you that the event is less improbable than it would have appeared to myself a twelvemonth ago. Deyverdun and I have often agreed, in jest and in earnest, that a house like ours would be regulated, and graced, and enlivened, by an agreeable female companion; but each of us seems desirous that his friend should sacrifice himself for the public good. Since my residence here I have lived much in women's company; and, to your credit be it spoken, I like you the better, the more I see of you. Not that I am in love with any particular person. I have discovered about half a dozen *wives* who would please me in different ways and by various merits: one as a mistress (a widow, vastly like *the* Eliza; if she returns, I am to bring them together); a second, a lively entertaining acquaintance; a third,

a sincere good-natured friend; a fourth, who would preside with grace and dignity at the head of my table and family; a fifth, an excellent economist and housekeeper; and a sixth, a very useful nurse. Could I find all these qualities united in a single person, I should dare to make my addresses, and should deserve to be refused. You hint, in some of your letters, or rather postscripts, that you consider me as having renounced England, and having fixed myself for the rest of my life in Switzerland, and that you suspect the sincerity of my vague or insidious schemes of purchase or return. To remove, as far as I can, your doubts and suspicions, I will tell you, on that interesting subject, fairly and simply as much as I know of my own intentions. There is little appearance that I shall be suddenly recalled by the offer of a place or pension. I have no claim to the friendship of your young minister; and should he propose a Commissioner of the Customs, or Secretary at Paris, the supposed objects of my low ambition, Adam in Paradise would refuse them with contempt. *Here* therefore I shall certainly live till I have finished the remainder of my history; an arduous work, which does not proceed so fast as I expected, amidst the avocations of society and miscellaneous study. As soon as it is completed, most probably in three or *four* years, I shall infallibly return to England about the month of May or June; and the necessary labour of printing with care two or three quarto volumes, will detain me till their publication in the ensuing spring. Lord Sheffield and yourself will be the loadstone that most forcibly attracts me; and as I shall be a vagabond on the face of the earth, I shall be the better qualified to domesticate myself with you, both in town and country. Here then, at no very extravagant distance, we have the certainty (if we live) of spending a year together in the peace and freedom of a friendly intercourse; and a year is no very contemptible portion of this mortal existence. Beyond that period all is dark,

but not gloomy. Whether, after the final completion of my History, I shall return to Lausanne, or settle in England, must depend on a thousand events which lie beyond the reach of human foresight,—the state of public and private affairs, my own health, the health and life of Deyverdun, the various changes which may have rendered Lausanne more dear, or less agreeable, to me than at present. But without losing ourselves in this distant futurity, which perhaps we may never see, and without giving any positive answer to Maria's parting question, whether I shall be buried in England or Switzerland, let me seriously and earnestly ask you, whether you do not mean to visit me next summer? The defeat at Coventry would, I should think, facilitate the project: since the baron is no longer detained the whole winter from his domestic affairs, nor is there any attendance on the House that keeps him till Midsummer in dust and dispute. I can send you a pleasant route through Normandy, Paris, and Lyons, a visit to the glaciers, and your return down the Rhine, which would be commodiously executed in three or four months, at no very extravagant expense, and would be productive of health and spirits to you, of entertainment to both, and of instruction to *the* Maria. Without the smallest inconveniency to myself, I am able to lodge yourselves and family by arranging you in the winter apartment, which in the summer season is not of any use to us. I think you will be satisfied with your habitation, and already see you in your dressing-room; a small pleasant room with a delightful prospect to the west and south. If poor aunt Kitty—(you oblige me beyond expression by your tender care of that excellent woman)—if she were only ten years younger, I would desire you to take her with you; but I much fear we shall never meet again. You will not complain of the brevity of *this* epistle; I expect, in return, a full and fair account of yourself, your thoughts and actions, soul and body, present and future, in the

safe though unreserved confidence of friendship. The baron in two words hinted but an indifferent account of your health; you are a fine machine; but as he was absent in Ireland, I hope I understand the cause and the remedy. Next to yourself, I want to hear of the two baronesses. You must give me a faithful picture (and though a mother, you can give it) of their present external and internal forms; for a year has now elapsed, and in *their* lives a year is an age. Adieu. Ever yours.

No. CLXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, March 13th, 1785.

My long silence (and it has been long) must not on this occasion be imputed to laziness, though that little devil may likewise have been busy. But you cannot forget how many weeks I remained in suspense, expecting every post the final sentence, and not knowing what to say in that passive uncertainty. It is now something more than a fortnight since your last letter and that of Gosling informed me of the event. I have intended every day to write, and every day I have started back with reluctance and disgust from the consideration of the wretched subject. Lenborough irrecoverably gone for three-fourths of its real, at least of its ancient, value; my seat in parliament sunk in the abyss of your cursed politics; and a balance neatly cyphered and summed by Gosling, which shews me a very shallow purse, in which others have a clearer right to dip than myself.

March 21st

Another week is now elapsed, and though nothing is changed in this too faithful state of my affairs, I feel myself able to encounter them with more spirit

and resolution ; to look on the future rather than the past, on the fair rather than on the foul side of the prospect. I shall speak in the confidence of friendship ; and while you listen to the more doleful tale of my wants and wishes, you will have the satisfaction of hearing some circumstances in my present situation of a less displeasing nature. 1. In the first place, I most heartily rejoice in the sale, however unfavourable, of the Bucks estate. Considering the dullness of the times, and the high interest of money, it is not a little to obtain even a tolerable price, and I am sensible how much your patience and industry have been exercised to extort the payment. 2. Your resistance to my Swiss expedition was more friendly than wise. Had I yielded, after eighteen months of suspense and anxiety, I should now, a still poorer man, be driven to embrace the same resource, which has succeeded according to, or even beyond, my most sanguine expectations. I do not pretend to have discovered the terrestrial paradise, which has not been known in this world since the fall of Adam ; but I can truly declare, (now the charms of novelty are long since faded,) that I have found the plan of life the best adapted to my temper and my situation. I am now writing to you in a room as good as that in Bentinck street, which commands the country, the lake, and the mountains, and the opening prospect of the spring. The aforesaid room is furnished without magnificence, but with every conveniency for warmth, ease, and study ; and the walls are already covered with more than two thousand volumes, the choice of a chosen library. I have health, friends, an amusing society, and perfect freedom. A Commissioner of the Excise ! The idea makes me sick. If you ask me what I have saved by my retreat to Lausanne, I will fairly tell you (in the two great articles of a carriage and a house in town, both which were indispensable, and are now annihilated, with the difference of clubs, public places, servants' wages, &c.) about four hun-

dred pounds, or guineas, a-year; no inconsiderable sum, when it must be annually found in addition to an expense which is somewhat larger than my present revenue. 3. *What is then, you will ask, my present establishment?* This is not by any means a cheap country; and, except in the article of wine, I could give a dinner, or make a coat, perhaps for the same price in London as at Lausanne. My chief advantage arises from the things which I do not want; and in some respects my style of living is enlarged by the increase of my relative importance; an obscure bachelor in England, the master of a considerable house at Lausanne. Here I am expected to return entertainments, to receive ladies, &c. and to perform many duties of society which, though agreeable enough in themselves, contribute to inflame the housekeeper's bills. But in a quiet, prudent, regular course of life, I think I can support myself with comfort and honour for six or seven hundred pounds a-year, instead of a thousand or eleven hundred in England.

Besides these uncertainties (uncertain at least as to the time) I have a sure and honourable supply from my own pen. I continue my History with pleasure and assiduity; the way is long and laborious, yet I see the end, and I can almost promise to land in England next September twelvemonth, with a manuscript of the current value of about four thousand pounds, which will afford either a small income or a large capital.

It is the privilege of friendship to make our friend a patient hearer and active associate in our own affairs; and I have now written five pages on my private affairs, without saying a word either of the public or of yourself. Of the public I have little to say; I never was a very warm patriot, and I grow every day a citizen of the world. The scramble for power or profit at Westminster or St James's, and the names of Pitt and Fox, become less interesting to me than those of Cæsar and Pompey. You are not a friend

of the young minister, but he was a great favourite on the continent, as he appears to be still ; and you must own that the fairness of his character, his eloquence, his application to business, and even his youth, must prepossess at least the ignorant in his favour. Of the merit or defects of his administration I cannot pretend to speak ; but I find, from the complaints of some interested persons, that his restraints on the smuggling of tea have already ruined the East India companies of Antwerp and Sweden ; and that even the Dutch will scarcely find it worth their while to send any ships to China. Your Irish friends appear to be more quiet, at least the volunteers and national congress seem to subside. How far that tranquillity must be purchased on our side by any pernicious sacrifices, you will best decide ; and from some hint in your last letters, I am inclined to think that you are less affected than might be supposed with national or local prejudice. Your introduction I have attentively read ; the matter, though most important in itself, is out of the line of my studies and habits, and the subordinate beauties of style you disclaim. Yet I can say with truth, that I never met with more curious and diligent investigation, more strong sense, more liberal spirit, and more cool and impartial temper, in the same number of pages. By this time you have probably read Necker's book on the finances. Perhaps for you there is too much French enthusiasm and paint ; but in many respects you must have gained a knowledge of his country ; and, on the whole, you must have been pleased with the picture of a great and benevolent mind. In your attack on Deyverdun for my picture I cannot promise you much success ; he seems resolved to maintain his right of possession, and your only chance would be a personal assault. The next summer (how time slips away !) was fixed for your visit to Lausanne. We are prepared at all points to receive *you*, my lady, and a princess or two, with their train ; and if you have

a proper contempt for St Stephen's chapel, you are perfectly free, and at leisure (can you ever be at leisure?) for the summer season. As you are now in a great measure disengaged from any affairs, you may find time to inform me of your proceedings and your projects. At present I do not even know whether you pass the winter at Sheffield place or in Downing street. My lady revenges herself of my long silence; yet I embrace her and the infants. Adieu. You have deranged the Decline and Fall this morning. I have finished my epistle since dinner, and am now going to a pleasant party and good supper

No. CLXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Lausanne, 1785.

EXTRACT from a weekly English paper, September 5th, 1785. "It is reported, but we hope without foundation, that the celebrated Mr Gibbon, who had retired to Lausanne, in Switzerland, to finish his valuable History, lately died in that city."

The hope of the newspaper-writer is very handsome and obliging to the Historian; yet there are several weighty reasons which would incline me to believe that the intelligence may be true. *Primo*, it must one day be true, and therefore may very probably be so at present. *Secundo*, we may always depend on the impartiality, accuracy, and veracity, of an English newspaper. *Tertio*, which is indeed the strongest argument, we are credibly informed that for a long time past the said celebrated historian has not written to any of his friends in England; and as that respectable personage had always the reputation of a most exact and regular correspondent, it may be fairly concluded from his silence, that he either is, or ought to be, dead. The only objection that I can foresee, is the assurance that Mr G—— himself read the

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article as he was eating his breakfast, and laughed very heartily at the mistake of his brother historian; but as he might be desirous of concealing that unpleasant event, we shall not insist on his apparent health and spirits, which might be affected by that subtle politician. He affirms, however, not only that he is alive, and was so on the 5th of September, but that his head, his heart, his stomach, are in the most perfect state, and that the climate of Lausanne has been congenial both to his mind and body. He confesses indeed, that after the last severe winter, the gout, his old enemy, from whom he hoped to have escaped, pursued him to his retreat among the mountains of Helvetia, and that the siege was long, though more languid than in his precedent attacks; after some exercise of patience he began to creep, and gradually to walk; and though he can neither run, nor fly, nor dance, he supports himself with firmness on his two legs, and would willingly kick the impertinent Gazetteer; impertinent enough, though more easily to be forgiven than the insolent *Courier du Bas Rhin*, who about three years ago amused himself and his readers with a fictitious epistle from Mr Gibbon to Dr Robertson.

Perhaps now you think, baron, that I shall apologise in humble style for my silence and neglect. But, on the contrary, I do assure you that I am truly provoked at your lordship's not condescending to be in a passion. I might really have been dead, I might have been sick; if I were neither dead nor sick, I deserved a volley of curses and reproaches for my infernal laziness, and you have defrauded me of my just dues. Had I been silent till Christmas, till doomsday, you would never have thought it worth your while to abuse me. Why then (let me ask in your name) did you not write before? That is indeed a very curious question of natural and moral philosophy. Certainly I am not lazy; elaborate quartos have proved, and will abundantly prove, my diligence. I *can* write;

spare my modesty on that subject. I like to converse with my friends by pen and tongue; and as soon as I can set myself a-going, I know no moments that run off more pleasantly. I am so well convinced of that truth, and so much ashamed of forcing people that I love to forget me, that I have now resolved to set apart the first hour of each day for the discharge of my obligations; beginning, *comme de raison*, with yourself, and regularly proceeding to lord Loughborough and the rest. May heaven give me strength and grace to accomplish this laudable intention! Amen. Certainly (yet I do not know whether it be so certain) I should write much oftener to you, if you were not linked in business, and if my business had not always been of the unpleasant and mortifying kind. Even now I shove the ugly monster to the end of this epistle, and will confine him to a page by himself, that he may not infect the purer air of our correspondence. Of my situation here I have little new to say, except a very comfortable and singular truth, that my passion for my wife or mistress (Fanny Lausanne) is not palled by satiety and possession of two years. I have seen her in all seasons, and in all humours; and though she is not without faults, they are infinitely overbalanced by her good qualities. Her face is not handsome, but her person, and every thing about her, has admirable grace and beauty: she is of a very cheerful, sociable temper; without much learning, she is endowed with taste and good sense; and though not rich, the simplicity of her education makes her a very good economist; she is forbid by her parents to wear any expensive finery; and though her limbs are not much calculated for walking, she has not yet asked me to keep her a coach. Last spring (not to wear the metaphor to rags) I saw Lausanne in a new light during my long fit of the gout, and must boldly declare, that either in health or sickness I find it far more comfortable than your huge metropolis. In London my confinement

was sad and solitary; the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes's; and the few, who sometimes cast a thought or an eye on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, the distance of the way, or the hours of the House of Commons; and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on Elmsley to enliven the dullness of the evening. Here the objects are nearer, and much more distinct, and I myself am an object of much larger magnitude. People are not kinder, but they are more idle; and it must be confessed that, of all nations on the globe, the English are the least attentive to the old and infirm; I do not mean in acts of charity, but in the offices of civil life. During three months I have had round my chair a succession of agreeable men and women, who came with a smile, and vanished at a nod; and as soon as it was agreeable, I had a constant party at cards, which was sometimes dismissed to their respective homes, and sometimes detained by Deyverdun to supper, without the least trouble or inconvenience to myself. In a word, my plan has most completely answered; and I solemnly protest, after two years trial, that I have never in a single moment repented of my transmigration. The only disagreeable circumstance is the increase of a race of animals with which this country has been long infested, and who are said to come from an island in the Northern Ocean. I am told, but it seems incredible, that upwards of forty thousand English, masters and servants, are now absent on the continent; and I am sure we have our full proportion, both in town and country, from the month of June to that of October. The occupations of the closet, indifferent health, want of horses, in some measure plead my excuse; yet I do too much to please myself, and probably too little to satisfy my countrymen. What is still more unlucky is, that a part of the colony of this present year are really good company, people one knows, &c.; the Astons, Hales, Hampdens, Trevors, lady Clarges

and miss Carter, lord Northington, &c. I have seen Trevor several times, who talks of you, and seems to be a more exact correspondent than myself. *His wife* is much improved by her diplomatic life, and shines in every company as a woman of fashion and elegance. But those who have repaid me for the rest, were lord and lady Spencer. I saw them almost every day, at my house or their own, during their stay of a month; for they were hastening to Italy, that they might return to London next February. He is a valuable man, and, where he is familiar, a pleasant companion; she a charming woman, who, with sense and spirit, has the simplicity and playfulness of a child. You are not ignorant of her talents, of which she has left me an agreeable specimen—a drawing of the Historic Muse, sitting in a thoughtful posture to compose. So much of Self and Co.; let us now talk a little of your house and your two countries. Does my lady ever join in the abuse which I have merited from you? Is she satisfied with her own behaviour, her unpardonable silence, to one of the prettiest, most obliging, most entertaining, most, &c. epistles that ever was penned since the epistles of * * * * *? Will she not *new* one word of reply? I want some account of her spirits, health, amusements, of the elegant accomplishments of Maria, and the opening graces of Louisa; of yourself I wish to have some of those details which she is most likely to transmit. Are you patient in your exclusion from the House? Are you satisfied with legislating with your pen? Do you pass the whole winter in town? Have you resumed the pursuits of farming, &c.? What new connections, public or private, have you formed? A tour to the continent would be the best medicine for the shattered nerves of a soldier and politician. By this expression you will perceive that your letter to Deyverdun is received; it landed last post, after I had already written the two first pages of this composition. On the whole, my friend was pleased and

flattered; but, instead of surrendering or capitulating, he seems to be making preparations for an obstinate defence. He already talks of the right of possession,* of the duties of a good citizen, of a writ of *ne exeat regno*, and of a vote of the Two Hundred, that whoever shall, directly or indirectly, &c. is an enemy to his country. Between you be the strife, while I sit with my scales in my hand, like Jupiter on Mount Ida. I begin to view with the same indifference the combat of Achilles Pitt and Hector Fox; for such, as it should now seem, must be the comparison of the two warriors. * * * * *

At this distance I am much less angry with bills, taxes, and propositions, than I am pleased with Pitt for making a friend and a deserving man happy, for releasing Batt from the shackles of the law, and for enhancing the gift of a secure and honourable competency, by the handsome manner in which it was conferred. This I understand to be the case, from the unsuspicious evidence of lord Northington and chief baron Skinner; and if I can find time (*resolution*) I will send him a hearty congratulation; if I fail, you may at least communicate my intentions. Of Ireland I know nothing; and while I am writing the Decline of a great Empire, I have not leisure to attend to the affairs of a remote and petty province. I see that your friend Foster has been hooted by the mob, and unanimously chosen speaker of the House of Commons. How could Pitt expose himself to the disgrace of withdrawing his propositions after a public attempt? Have ministers no way of computing beforehand the sense or nonsense of an Irish Parliament? I am quite in the dark; your pamphlet, or book, would probably have opened my eyes; but, whatever may have been the reason, I give you *my word of honour* that I have never seen nor heard of it. Here we are much more engaged with continental

* His portrait, painted by sir Joshua Reynolds.

politics. In general we hate the emperor as the enemy of peace, without daring to make war. The old lion of Prussia acts a much more glorious part, as the champion of public tranquillity and the independence of the German States.

And now for the bitter and nauseous pill of pecuniary business, upon which I shall be as concise as possible in the two articles of my discourse, land and money. * * * * * It is impossible to hate more than I do this odious necessity of owing, borrowing, anticipating; and I look forwards with impatience to the happy period when the supplies will always be raised within the year, with a decent and useful surplus in the treasury. I now trust to the conclusion of my History, that it will hasten and secure the principal comforts of my life. You will believe I am not lazy; yet I fear the term is somewhat more distant than I thought. My long gout lost me three months in the spring; in every great work unforeseen dangers, and difficulties, and delays, will arise; and I should be rather sorry than surprised if next autumn was postponed to the ensuing spring. If my lady (a good creature) should write to Mrs Porten, she may convey news of my life and health, without saying anything of this *possible* delay. Adieu. I embrace, &c.

Lausanne, October 1st, 1785.

No. CLXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, January 17th, 1786.

HEAR, all ye nations! An epistle from Sheffield-place, received the seventeenth of January, is answered the same day; and to say the truth, this method, which is the best, is at the same time the most easy and pleasant. Yet I do not allow that on the last past silence and delay you have any more

reason to swear than myself. Our letters crossed each other; our claims are equal; and if both had been stiffly maintained, our mutual silence must have continued till the day of judgment. The balance was doubtless in my favour, if you recollect the length, the fulness, the variety of pleasant and instructive matter, of my last dispatch. Even at present, of myself, my occupations, my designs, I have little or nothing to add; and can only speak dryly and briefly to very dry and disagreeable business. * * * * * But we shall both agree that the true criminal is my lady; and though I do suppose that a letter is on the road, which will make some amends, her obstinate, contumacious, dilatory silence, so many months or years since my valuable letter, is worthy a royal tigress. * * * * * Notwithstanding your gloomy politicians, I do love the funds: and were the next war to reduce them to half, the remainder would be a better and pleasanter property than a similar value in your dirty acres.

No. CLXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO SIR STANIER PORTEN,
KENSINGTON PALACE.

MY DEAR SIR, Lausanne, May 12th, 1786.

THE melancholy event which you have communicated in your last obliging letter of the twenty-fourth of April, might indeed be too naturally feared and expected. If we consult our reason, we can wish nothing better for ourselves than the lot of that dear and valuable friend whom we have now lost.* A warm heart, a strong and clear understanding, a most invaluable happiness of temper, which shewed her the agreeable or comfortable side of every object, and every situation; an easy competency, the reward of her own attention; private friendship, general esteem,

* His aunt, Mrs Catherine Porten.

a mature age, and a placid decline. But these rational motives of consolation are insufficient to check a thousand soft and sad remembrances that rush into my mind; the intimacy of a whole life—of mine, at least, from the earliest dawn of my infancy; the maternal and assiduous care of my health, and afterwards of my mind; the freedom and frequency of our conversations; the regret which I felt in our last separation, and the hope, however faint and precarious, of seeing her again. Time alone can reconcile us to this irreparable loss, and to his healing power I must recommend your grief, as well as my own. I sincerely applaud her very proper and natural disposal of her effects, and am proud of the pre-eminence which she has allowed me in a list of dear and worthy relations.

I am too full of a single idea to expatiate, as I should otherwise do, on indifferent matters; yet not totally indifferent to my friends, since they relate to my present situation. My health is in general perfectly good, and the only drawbacks some occasional visits of the gout, which abate however in strength, and are grown, I think, less frequent and lasting. The life which I lead is temperate and tranquil, and the distemper itself is not common in the purity and dryness of the climate. After a long trial, I can now approve my own choice of retiring to Switzerland. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours.

No. CLXIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, January 20th, 1787.

AFTER some sallies of wrath, you seem at length to have subsided in sullen silence, and I must confess not totally without reason. Yet if your mind be still open to truth, you will confess that I am not so black as I appear. 1. Your lordship has shewn much less

activity and eloquence than formerly, and your last letter was an answer to mine, which I had expected some time with impatience. Bad examples are dangerous to young people. 2. Formerly I have neglected answering your epistles on essential though unpleasant business; and the *res-publica* or *privata* may have suffered by my neglect. Supposing therefore we had no transactions, why should I write so often? To exchange sentimental compliments, or to relate the various and important transactions of the republic of Lausanne. As long as I do not inform you of my death, you have good grounds to believe me alive and well. You have a general, and will soon have a more particular, idea of my system and arrangement here. One day glides away after another in tranquil uniformity. Every object must have sides and moments less luminous than others; but, upon the whole, the life and the place which I have chosen are most happily adapted to my character and circumstances; and I can now repeat, at the end of three years, what I soon and sincerely affirmed, that never, in a single instant, have I repented of my scheme of retirement to Lausanne; a retirement which was judged by my best and wisest friend a project little short of insanity. The place, the people, the climate, have answered or exceeded my warmest expectations. And though I truly rejoice in my approaching visit to England, Mr Pitt, were he your friend and mine, would not find it an easy task to prevent my return. 3. And now let me add a third reason, which often diverted me from writing; namely, my impatience to see you this next summer. I am building a great book, which, besides the three stories already exposed to the public eye, will have three stories more before we reach the roof and battlements. You too have built or altered a great gothic castle with baronial battlements. Did you finish it within the time you intended? As that time drew near, did you not find a thousand nameless and unexpected works that must

be performed, each of them calling for a portion of time and labour? And had you not despised, nobly despised, the minute diligence of finishing, fitting up, and furnishing, the apartments, you would have discovered a new train of indispensable business. Such, at least, has been my case. A long while ago, when I contemplated the distant prospect of my work, I gave you and myself some hopes of landing in England last autumn; but, alas! when autumn grew near, hills began to rise on hills, Alps on Alps, and I found my journey far more tedious and toilsome than I had imagined. When I look back on the length of the undertaking, and the variety of materials, I cannot accuse or suffer myself to be accused of idleness; yet it appeared that unless I doubled my diligence, another year, and perhaps more, would elapse before I could embark with my complete manuscript. Under these circumstances I took, and am still executing, a bold and meritorious resolution. The mornings in winter, and in a country of early dinners, are very concise; to them, my usual period of study, I now frequently add the evenings, renounce cards and society, refuse the most agreeable evenings, or perhaps make my appearance at a late supper. By this extraordinary industry, which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last part of my History growing apace under my hands; all my materials are collected and arranged; I can exactly compute, by the square foot, or the square page, all that remains to be done; and after concluding text and notes, after a general review of my time and my ground, I now can decisively ascertain the final period of the Decline and Fall, and can boldly promise that I will dine with you at Sheffield place in the month of August, or perhaps of July, in the present year; within less than a twelvemonth of the term which I had loosely and originally fixed. And perhaps it would not be easy to find a work of that size and importance in which the workman has

so tolerably kept his word with himself and the public. But in this situation, oppressed with this particular object, and stealing every hour from my amusement, to the fatigue of the pen and the eyes, you will conceive, or you might conceive, how little stomach I have for the epistolary style: and that instead of idle though friendly correspondence, I think it far more agreeable to employ my time in the effectual measures that may hasten and exhilarate our personal interview. About a month ago I had a voluntary, and not unpleasing, epistle from Cadell; he informs me that he is going to print a new octavo edition, the former being exhausted, and that the public expect with impatience the conclusion of that excellent work, whose reputation increases every day, &c. I answered him by the return of the post, to inform him of the period and extent of my labours, and to express a reasonable hope that he would set the same value on the three last as he had done on the three former volumes. Should we conclude in this easy manner a transaction so honourable to the author and bookseller, my way is clear and open before me; in pecuniary matters I think I am assured for the rest of my life of never troubling my friends, or being troubled myself; a state to which I aspire, and which I indeed deserve, if not by my management, at least by my moderation.

In your last, you talk more of the French treaty than of yourself and your wife and family; a true English *quidnunc*! For my part, in this remote, inland, neutral country, you will suppose that after a slight glance on the papers, I have neither had the means nor the inclination to think very deeply about it. As a citizen of the world, a character to which I am every day rising or sinking, I must rejoice in every agreement that diminishes the separation between neighbouring countries, which softens their prejudices, unites their interests and industry, and renders their future hostilities less frequent and less

implacable. With regard to the present treaty, I hope both nations are gainers; since otherwise it cannot be lasting; and such double mutual gain is surely possible in fair trade, though it could not easily happen in the mischievous amusements of war and gaming. * * * * * What a delightful hand have these great statesmen made of it since my departure! Without power, and, as far as I can see, without hope. When we meet, I shall advise you to digest all your political and commercial knowledge, (England, Ireland, France, America,) and, with some attention to style and order, to make the whole a classic book, which may preserve your name and benefit your country. I know not whether you have seen sir Henry Clinton since his return: he passed a day with me, and seemed pleased with my reception and place. We talked over you and the American war. I embrace the *silent my lady*, and the two honourable misses, whom I sigh to behold and admire. Adieu. Ever yours.

Though I can part with land, you find I cannot part with books: the remainder of my library has so long enbarrassed your room, that it may now await my presence and final judgment. Has my lady read a novel intitled *Caroline de Lichfield*. of our home manufacture? I may say of ours, since Deyverdun and myself were the judges and patrons of the manuscript. The author, who is since married a second time, (madame de Crousaz, now Montolieu,) is a charming woman. I was in some danger.

No. CLXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, June 2nd, 1787.

I BEGIN to discover that if I wait till I could achieve a just and satisfactory epistle, equally pleasant and instructive, you would have a poor chance of

hearing from me. I will therefore content myself with a simple answer to a question, which (I love to believe) you repeat with some impatience : " When may we expect you in England ! " My great building is, as it were, completed, and some slight ornaments, painting and glazing of the last finished rooms, may be dispatched without inconvenience in the autumnal residence of Sheffield place. It is therefore my sincere and peremptory intention to depart from Lausanne about the twentieth of July, and to find myself (*me trouver*) in London on or before the glorious first of August. I know of nothing that can prevent it but a fit of the gout, the capricious tyrant who obeys no laws either of time or place ; and so unfortunately are we circumstanced, that such a fit, if it came late and lasted long, would effectually disable me from coming till next spring ; since thereby I should lose the season, the monsoon, for the impression of three quarto volumes, which will require nine months (a regular parturition,) and cannot advantageously appear after the beginning or middle of May. At the same time do not be apprehensive that I mean to play you a dog's trick. From a thousand motives it is my wish to come over this year ; the desire of seeing you, and the *silent sullen* my lady ; the family arrangements, discharge of servants, which I have already made ; the strong wish of settling my three youngest children in a manner honourable to them and beneficial to their parents. Much miscellaneous matter rises to my pen, but I will not be tempted to turn the leaf. Expect me therefore at Sheffield place, with strong probability, about the fifteenth of August. Adieu. Yours.

No. CLXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Adelphi Hotel, August 8th, 1787.

INTELLIGENCE EXTRAORDINARY. This day (August the seventh) the celebrated E. G. arrived with a numerous retinue (one servant.) We hear that he has brought over from Lausanne the remainder of his History for immediate publication. The post had left town before my arrival. I am pleased, but indeed astonished, to find myself in London, after a journey of six hundred miles; and hardly yet conceive how I had resolution to undertake it. I find myself not a little fatigued, and have devoted this hot day to privacy and repose, without having seen anybody except Cadell and Elmsley, and my neighbour Batt, whose civility amounts to kindness and real friendship. But you may depend on it, that instead of sauntering in town, or giving way to every temptation, I will dispatch my necessary work, and hasten with impatience to the groves of Sheffield place; a project somewhat more rational than the hasty turbulent visit which your vigour had imagined. If you come up to quicken my diligence, we shall meet the sooner; but I see no appearance of my leaving town before the end of next week. I embrace, &c. Adieu.

No. CLXXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Monday Afternoon, 1787.

I PRECIPITATE! I inconvenience! Alas! alas! I am a poor miserable cripple, confined to my chair. Last Wednesday evening I felt some flying symptoms of the gout: for two succeeding days I struggled bravely, and went in a chair to dine with Batt and Lord Loughborough; but on Saturday I yielded to my

conqueror. I have now passed three wearisome days without amusement, and three miserable nights without sleep. Yet my acquaintance are charitable; and as virtue should never be made too difficult, I feel that a man has more friends in Pallmall than in Bentinck street. This fit is remarkably painful; the enemy is possessed of the left foot and knee, and how far he may carry the war, God only knows. Of futurity it is impossible to speak; but it will be fortunate if I am able to leave town by the end, not of this, but of the ensuing week. What may be the future progress, whether slow or rapid, fluctuating or steady, time alone will determine; and to that master of human knowledge I must leave our Bath journey. Pity me, magnanimous baron; pity me, tender females; pity me, Swiss exile;* and believe me, it is far better to be learning English at Uckfield. I write with difficulty, as the least motion or constraint in my attitude is repeated by all the nerves and sinews in my knee. But you shall find each day a note or bulletin of my health. Tomorrow I must give pain to Mrs Gibbon. Adieu. Ever yours.

No. CLXXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SHEFFIELD.

December 18th, 1787.

ALAS! alas! alas! How vain and fallacious are all the designs of man! This is now the eighteenth of December, precisely one month since my departure from Sheffield place; and it was firmly my wish, my hope, my resolution, that after dispatching some needful business in London, and accomplishing a pious duty at Bath, I should by this day be restored to the tranquil leisure, and friendly society, of Sheffield place. A cruel tyrant has disconcerted all my plans;

* M. Wilhelm de Severy,

my business in town has been neglected, my attendance at Bath is just begun, and my return is yet distant. I was not a little edified to hear of some expressions of regret and discontent on my departure; and though I am not able to produce as good evidence, you will perhaps believe that in the solitude of a London lodging I often railed at the gout for maliciously delaying his attack till I was removed from a place where my suffering would have been alleviated by every kind and comfortable attention. I grew at last so desperately impatient, as to resolve on immediate flight, without waiting till I had totally expelled the foe and recovered my strength. I performed the journey with tolerable ease, but the motion has agitated the remains of the humour. I am very lame, and a second fit may possibly be the punishment of my rashness.

As yet I have seen nothing of Bath except Mrs Gibbon, and weakness as well as propriety will confine me very closely to her. Lord Sheffield, with Mrs Holroyd and Maria, dined with us yesterday. We begin to throw out hints of the shortness of our stay, and indispensable business; and, unless I should be confined by the gout, it is resolved in our cabinet to leave Bath on Thursday the twenty-sixth, and passing through lord Loughborough's and town, to settle at Sheffield place, most assuredly before the end of the year. For my own part I can say with truth, that did not the press loudly demand my presence, I could, without a sigh, allow the duchess to reign in Downing street the greatest part of the winter, and should be happy in the society of two persons (no common blessing) whom I love, and by whom I am beloved.

Adieu, dear madam, and believe me, with the affection of a friend and a brother, ever yours.

No. CLXXIV.

DE WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

College of Edinburgh,
Feb. 27th, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH you have now been some time in London, yet as I heard of your welfare by different channels, and as I know from experience how much a man has to do who is printing three quartos, even after he thinks they are altogether ready for the press, I have hitherto forbore to interrupt you by any letter or enquiry of mine. But there is such a general impatience to see your new publication among people of letters here, and, as your friend, I am so frequently interrogated about the length it has advanced, and the time when it will appear, that I begin to be ashamed of knowing nothing more about it than other people. I must request of you then to furnish me with such information as may both preserve my credit, and gratify my own curiosity. My expectations from this part of your work are indeed very high. Your materials begin to improve, and are certainly much more copious than during a great part of the period you have gone through. You have three or four events as great, and splendid, and singular, as the heart of an historian could wish to delineate. The contemporary writers will furnish you with all the necessary facts. To adorn them as elegant writers, or to account for them as philosophers, never entered into their heads. This they have left to you.

Since you went to the continent, I have not done so much as I wished. My health, until lately, has been more shattered; and as I advance in life, (I am now sixty-six,) though my faculties, I imagine, are still entire, yet I find my mind less active and ardent. I have however finished a very careful revise of all my works, and have given them the last polish they will receive from my hand. I have made some additions

to each of them, and in the History of Scotland pretty considerable ones. I have desired Mr Strahan to send you a copy of them uniformly bound, and hope you will accept of them as a memorial of my esteem and affection. You will see that I have got in Mr Whitaker an adversary so bigotted and zealous, that though I have denied no article of faith, and am at least as orthodox as himself, yet he rails against me with all the asperity of theological hatred. I shall adhere to my fixed maxim of making no reply. May I hope that when you see lord Loughborough, you will remember me to him with kindness and respect? Our friend Mr Smith, whom we were in great danger of losing, is now almost perfectly re-established. I have the honour to be, with great truth, your most faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

No. CLXXV.

LORD NORTH TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Grosvenor street, May 1st, 1788.

UPON the receipt of your books, and the perusal of your preface,* my heart was too full to give you an immediate answer: so kind and honourable a testi-

* Alluding to the following beautiful and just encomium in the Preface to the last three volumes of Mr Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: "Were I ambitious of any other patron than the public, I would inscribe this work to a statesman who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate, administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy: who has retained in his fall from power many faithful and disinterested friends; and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigour of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. Lord North will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth; but even truth and friendship should be silent, if he still dispensed the favours of the crown." S.

mony of your friendship and esteem would have afforded me the greatest pleasure in the moment of my highest health and political prosperity; judge then what I must feel upon receiving it in my retirement, while labouring under a calamity which would be severe, were it not for the goodness of my friends. I have it, thank God, in my power to return your kindness in the manner which will be most agreeable to you, by assuring you sincerely that nothing could have given me more real comfort and satisfaction than the notice that you have taken of me. I am, dear sir, most gratefully yours,

NORTH.

No. CLXXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD.

Downing street, June 21st, 1788.

INSTEAD of the Historian, you receive a short letter, in your eyes an indispensable tribute. This day, at length, after long delay and frequent expostulation, I have received the writings, which I am now in the act of signing, sealing, and delivering, according to the lawyer's directions. * * * * *
I long to be at Sheffield place. You see my departure is not postponed a moment by idleness or pleasure, but the precise day still hangs on contingencies, and we must all be patient if our wishes should be thwarted. I say our wishes, for I sincerely desire to be with you. I have had many dinners, some splendid and memorable; with Hastings last Thursday, with the prince of Wales next Tuesday at Craufurd's. But the town empties, Texier is silent, and in an evening I *desiderate* the resources of a family or a club. Caplin has finished the Herculean labour, and seven majestic boxes will abdicate on Monday your hall. Severy has likewise dispatched his affairs, and secured his companion Clarke, who is arrived in town; but his schemes are abridged by the inexorable rigour of

lord Howe, who has assured our great and fair intercessors, that by the king's order the dock-yards are shut against all strangers. We therefore give up Portsmouth, and content ourselves with two short trips; one to Stowe and Oxford, the other to Chatham; and if we can catch a launch and review, *encore vit on*. He (Severy, not lord Howe) salutes with me the family. Adieu. Yours.

No. CLXXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Downing street, Saturday.

ACCORDING to your imperious law, I write a line to postpone my arrival till Friday, or perhaps Saturday, but I hope Friday; and I promise you that not a moment shall be wasted. And now let me add a cool word as to my final departure, which is irrevocably fixed between the tenth and fifteenth of July. After a full and free enjoyment of each other's society, let us submit, without a struggle, to reason and fate. It would be idle to pretend business at Lausanne; but a complete year will elapse before my return. Severy and myself are now expected with some impatience. I am thankful for your hospitable entertainment; but I wish you to remember Homer's admirable precept:

"Welcome the coming, *speed* the parting guest.

Spare me therefore, spare yourself, the trouble of a fruitless contest, in which, according to a great author, I foresee a certain loss of time, and a probable loss of temper. I believe we shall have both Craufurd and Hugonin at Sheffield place. Adieu.

No. CLXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Downing street, June, 1788.

I HAVE but a moment between my return home and my dressing, and heartily tired I am; for I am

now involved in the horrors of shopping, packing, &c.; yet I must write four lines to prevent a growl, which might salute the arrival of an empty-handed post on Sunday. I hope the whole caravan, Christians and Pagans, arrived in good health at the castle; that the turrets begin to rise to the third heaven; that each has found a proper occupation; and that Tuft* enjoys the freedom and felicity of the lawn. Yesterday the august scene was closed for this year. Sheridan surpassed himself; and though I am far from considering him as a perfect orator, there were many beautiful passages in his speech, on justice, filial love, &c.; one of the closest chains of argument I ever heard, to prove that Hastings was responsible for the acts of Middleton; and a compliment, much admired, to a certain historian of your acquaintance. Sheridan, in the close of his speech, sunk into Burke's arms;—a good actor; but I called this morning—he is perfectly well. Adieu.

No. CLXXIX.

DR WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO MR GIBBON.

College of Edinburgh,
July 30th, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

LONG before this I should have acknowledged the receipt of your most acceptable present; but for several weeks I have been afflicted with a violent fit of deafness, and that unsocial malady is always accompanied with such a degree of languor, as renders even the writing of a letter an effort. During my solitude the perusal of your book has been my chief amusement and consolation. I have gone through it once with great attention; and am now advanced to the last volume in my second reading. I ventured to predict the superior excellence of the volumes lately published,

* Lady Sheffield's lap-dog.

and I have not been a false prophet. Indeed, when I consider the extent of your undertaking, and the immense labour of historical and philosophic research requisite towards executing every part of it, I am astonished that all this should have been accomplished by one man. I know no example, in any age or nation, of such a vast body of valuable and elegant information communicated by any individual. I feel, however, some degree of mortification mingled with my astonishment. Before you began your historic career, I used to pride myself in being at least the most industrious historian of the age; but now, alas! I can pretend no longer even to that praise, and must say, as Pliny did of his uncle, "*Si comparer illi, sum desidiosissimus.*" Your style appears to me improved in these new volumes; by the habit of writing you write with greater ease. I am sorry to find that our ideas on the effects of the Crusades do not altogether coincide. I considered that point with great care, and cannot help thinking still that my opinion was well founded. I shall consult the authorities to which I refer; for when my sentiments differ from yours, I have some reason to distrust them; and I may possibly trouble you with a letter on the subject. I am much flattered with the manner in which you have so often mentioned my name. *Lætus sum laudari a te laudato viro.* I feel much satisfaction in having been distinguished by the two historians of my own times, whose favourable opinion I was most ambitious of obtaining.

I hope this letter may find you still in England. When you return to Lausanne, permit me to recommend to your good offices my youngest son, who is now at Yverdun on account of his health, and lives with M. Herman, a clergyman there. You will find the young man (if you can rely on the partial testimony of a father) sensible, modest, and well-bred; and though no great scholar, he has seen much, hav-

ing returned from India, where he served last war, by Bassora, Bagdat, Moussul, and Aleppo. He is now a captain in the twenty-third regiment. If you have any friend at Yverdun, be so good as to recommend him. It will do him credit to have your countenance. I have desired him to pay his respects to you at Lausanne. Farewell, my dear sir. I ever am yours most faithfully.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

No. CLXXX.

DR ADAM SMITH TO MR GIBBON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Edinburgh, Dec. 10th, 1788.

I HAVE ten thousand apologies to make, for not having long ago returned you my best thanks for the very agreeable present you made me of the three last volumes of your History. I cannot express to you the pleasure it gives me to find that, by the universal assent of every man of taste and learning, whom I either know or correspond with, it sets you at the very head of the whole literary tribe at present existing in Europe. I ever am, my dear friend,

Most affectionately yours,

ADAM SMITH.

No. CLXXXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO MRS GIBBON, BELVIDERE,
BATH.

DEAR MADAM,

Lausanne, May 18th, 1791.

As much as I am accustomed to my own sins, I am shocked, really shocked, when I think of my long and most inexcusable silence; nor do I dare to compute how many months I have suffered to elapse without sending a single line (Oh shame! shame!) to the best and dearest of my friends, who indeed has been

very seldom out of my thoughts. I have sometimes imagined that if the opportunities of writing occurred less frequently, they would be seized with more diligence; but the unfortunate departure of the post twice every week encourages procrastination, and each short successive delay is indulged without scruple, till the whole has swelled to a tremendous account. I will try, alas! to reform; and, although I am afraid that writing grows painful to you, I have the confidence to solicit a *speedy line*, to say that you love and forgive me. After a long experience of the unfeeling doubts and delays of the law, you will probably soon hear from lord Sheffield that the Beriton transaction is at last concluded, and I hope that you will be satisfied with the full and firm security of your annuity. That you may long continue to enjoy it, is the first and most sincere wish of my heart.

In the placid course of our lives, at Lausanne and Bath, we have few events to relate, and fewer changes to describe; but I indulge myself in the pleasing belief that we are both as well and as happy as the common order of nature will allow us to expect. I should be satisfied, had I received from time to time some indirect, but agreeable, information of your health. For myself, I have no complaint except the gout; and though the visits of my old enemy are somewhat longer and more enfeebling, they are confined to my feet and knees; the pain is moderate, and my imprisonment to my chamber, or my chair, is much alleviated by the daily kindness of my friends. I wish it were in my power to give you an adequate idea of the conveniency of my house, and the beauty of my garden; both of which I have improved at a considerable expense since the death of poor Deyverdun. But the loss of a friend is indeed irreparable. Were I ten years younger, I might possibly think of a female companion; but the choice is difficult, the success doubtful, the engagement perpetual, and at fifty-four a man should never think of altering the

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whole system of his life and habits. The disposal of Beriton, and the death of my aunt Hester, who has left me her estate in Sussex, makes me very easy in my worldly affairs : my income is equal to my expense, and my expense is adequate to my wishes. You may possibly have heard of literary projects which are ascribed to me by the public without my knowledge : but it is much more probable that I have closed the account ; and though I shall never lay aside the pleasing occupations of study, you may be assured that I have no serious settled thoughts of a new work. Next year I shall meditate, and I trust shall execute, a visit to England, in which the Belvidere is one of my powerful loadstones. I often reflect with a painful emotion on the imperious circumstances which have thrown us at such a distance from each other.

In the moving picture of the world, you cannot be indifferent to the strange revolution which has humbled all that was high, and exalted all that was low, in France. The irregular and lively spirit of the nation has disgraced their liberty ; and instead of building a free constitution, they have only exchanged despotism for anarchy. This town and country are crowded with noble exiles ; and we sometimes count in an assembly a dozen princesses and duchesses. Burke, if I remember right, is no favourite of yours ; but there is surely much eloquence and much sense in his book. The prosperity of England forms a proud contrast with the disorders of France ; but I hope we shall avoid the folly of a Russian war. Pitt, in this instance, seems too like his father. Mr Helrard, a sensible man, and his pupil, have left us. They found, as your friends will always find, the weight of your recommendation with me. I am, dearest madam, ever most affectionately yours.

No. CLXXXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAREST MADAM, Lausanne, Aug. 1st, 1792

THE extraordinary state of public affairs in France opposes an insuperable bar to my passage; and every prudent stranger will avoid that inhospitable land, in which a people of slaves is suddenly become a nation of tyrants and cannibals. The German road is indeed safe, but, independent of a great addition of fatigue and expense, the armies of Austria and Prussia now cover that frontier; and though the generals are polite, and the troops well disciplined, I am not desirous of passing through the clouds of hussars and pandours that attend their motions. These public reasons are fortified by some private motives, and to this delay I resign myself, with a sigh for the present, and a hope for the future.

What a strange wild world do we live in! You will allow me to be a tolerable historian, yet, on a fair review of ancient and modern times, I can find none that bear any affinity with the present. My knowledge of your discerning mind, and my recollection of your political principle, assure me that you are no more a *democrat* than myself. Had the French improved their glorious opportunity to erect a free constitutional monarchy on the ruins of arbitrary power and the Bastille, I should applaud their generous effort; but this total subversion of all rank, order, and government, could be productive only of a popular monster which, after devouring everything else, must finally devour itself. I was once apprehensive that this monster would propagate some imps in our happy island, but they seem to have been crushed in their cradle; and I acknowledge with pleasure and pride the good sense of the English nation, who seem truly conscious of the blessings which they enjoy: and I am happy to find that the most respectable part

of Opposition has cordially joined in the support of "things as they are." Even this country has been somewhat tainted with the democratical infection; the vigilance of government has been exerted, the malcontents have been awed, the misguided have been undeceived, the fever in the blood has gradually subsided, and I flatter myself that we have secured the tranquil enjoyment of obscure felicity, which we had been almost tempted to despise.

You have heard, most probably, from Mrs Holroyd,* of the long-expected though transient satisfaction which I received from the visit of lord Sheffield's family. He appeared highly satisfied with my arrangements here, my house, garden, and situation, at once in town and country, which are indeed singular in their kind, and which have often made me regret the impossibility of shewing them to my dearest friend of the Belvidere. Lord Sheffield is still, and will ever continue, the same active being; always employed for himself, his friends, and the public, and always persuading himself that he wishes for leisure and repose. He has now a new care on his hands, the management and disposal of his eldest daughter, who is indeed a most extraordinary young woman. There are various roads to happiness; but when I compare his situation with mine, I do not, upon the whole, repent that I have given the preference to a life of celibacy and retirement. Although I have been long a spectator of the great world, my unambitious temper has been content with the occupations and rewards of study; and although my library be still my favourite room, I am now no longer stimulated by the prosecution of any literary work. Adieu, dear madam; may every blessing that nature can allow be attendant on your latter season! Your age and my habits will not permit a very close correspond-

* Of Bath.

ence; but I wish to hear, and I *presume* to ask, a speedy *direct* account of your own situation. May it be such as I shall hear with pleasure! Once more adieu. I live in hopes of embracing you next summer at the Belvidere, but you may be assured that I bring over nothing for the press.

No. CLXXXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY ELIZABETH FOSTER, AT FLORENCE.

Lausanne, November 8th, 1792.

I REMEMBER it has been observed of Augustus and Cromwell, that they should never have been born, or never have died; and I am sometimes tempted to apply the same remark to certain beings of a softer nature, who, after a short residence on the banks of the Lemane lake, are now flown far away over the Alps and the Appenines, and have abandoned their votaries to the insipidity of common life. The remark, however, would be unreasonable, and the sentiment ungrateful. The pleasures of the summer, the lighter and the graver moments of the society of *petit Ouchy*,* are indeed past, perhaps never to return; but the remembrance of that delightful period is itself a pleasure, and I enjoy, I cherish, the flattering persuasion that it is remembered with some satisfaction in the gallery of Florence, as well as in *the library* of Lausanne. Long before we were reduced to seek a refuge from the savages of Gaul, I had secretly indulged the thought, or at least the wish, of asking leave to attend *mes bonnes amies* over Mount Cenis, of basking once more in an Italian sun, and of paying once more my devotions to the Apollo of the Vatican.

* A beautiful villa near the lake, about a mile from Lausanne, where the duchess of Devonshire and lady Elizabeth Foster resided.

But my aged and gouty limbs would have failed me in the bold attempt of scaling St Bernard, and I wanted patience to undertake the circumitineration of the Tyrol. Your return to the Pays de Vaud next summer I hold to be extremely doubtful; but my anxiety on that head is somewhat diminished by the sure and certain hope of our all meeting in England the ensuing winter. I flatter myself that the porter of Devonshire-house will not be inexorable; yet I am afraid of losing you amidst the smoke and tumult of fashionable London, in which the night is devoted to pleasure, and the morning to sleep. My ambition may perhaps aspire to pass some hours in the palladian Chiswick, or even some days at Chatsworth; but these princely mansions will not recal the freedom, the ease, the *primitive* solitude, of dear little Ouchy. Indeed! indeed! your fair friend was made for something better than a duchess.

Although you most magnanimously abandoned us in the crisis of our fate, yet, as you seem to interest yourself in the hopes and fears of this little country, it is my duty to inform you, that we still hang in a state of suspense; inclining, however, to the side of hope rather than of despair. The garrison, and even the bourgeoisie, of Geneva shewed a vigorous resolution of defending the city; and our frontiers have been gradually covered with fifteen thousand intrepid Swiss. But the threats of a bombardment, the weight of expense, and, above all, the victorious ascendant of the French republic, have abated much of the first heroic ardour. Monsieur de Montesquiou displayed a pacific, and even yielding, temper; and a treaty was signed, dismissing the Swiss garrison from Geneva, and removing the French troops to the distance of ten leagues. But this last condition, which is indeed objectionable, displeased the Convention, who refused to ratify the agreement. New conferences were held, new messengers have been despatched; but unless they are determined to find or to make a

subject of quarrel, it is probable that we shall purchase peace by submission. As Geneva has a very dangerous democratical party within her walls; and as the national guards are already allowed to enter the city, and to tamper with the inhabitants and the garrison, I will not ensure that poor little republic from one week to another. For ourselves, the approaches of danger must be more gradual. I think we are now safe for this winter, and I no longer run to the window to see whether the French are coming. But with so many enemies without, and so many within, the government of Berne, and the tranquillity of this happy country, will be suspended by a very slender twig; and I begin to fear that Satan will drive me out of the possession of Paradise. My only comfort will be, that I shall have been expelled by the power, and not seduced by the arts, of the blackest demon in hell—the demon of democracy. Where indeed will this tremendous inundation, this conspiracy of numbers against rank and property, be finally stopped? Europe seems to be universally tainted, and wherever the French can light a match, they may blow up a mine. Our only hope is now in their devouring one another; they are furious and hungry monsters, and war is almost declared between the Convention and the city of Paris, between the moderate republicans and the absolute levellers. A majority of the Convention wishes to spare the royal victims, but they must yield to the rage of the people and the thirst of popularity, and a few hours may produce a trial, a sentence, and a guillotine. Mr Necker is publishing a pamphlet in defence of the august sufferers; but his feeble and tardy efforts will rather do credit to himself than service to his clients. You kindly ask after the situation of poor Severy. Alas! it is now hopeless; all his complaints are increased, all his resources are exhausted; where nature cannot work, the effect of art is vain; and his best friends begin to wish him a quiet release. His

wife. I had almost said his widow, is truly an object of compassion. The dragoon is returned for a few days; and if his domestic sorrows gave him leave, he would almost regret the want of an occasion to deserve his feather and cockade. Your note has been communicated to madame de Montolieu; but as she is engaged with a dying aunt, I have not yet seen her. Madame Dagaisseau has hastily left us; the last decrees seemed to give the *émigrés* only the option of starving abroad or hanging at home; yet she has ventured into France, on some faint glimpse of clemency for the women and children. Madame de Bouillon does not appear to move. Madame de Staël, whom I saw last week at Rolle, is still uncertain where she shall drop her burthen; but she must soon resolve, for the young lady or gentleman is at the door—

— Demanding life, impatient for the skies.

By this time you have joined the ladies Spencer and Duncannon, whom I beg leave to salute with the proper shades of respect and tenderness. You may, if you please, be *belle comme ange*; but I do not like your comparison of the archangel. Those of Milton, with whom I am better acquainted at present than with Guido, are all masculine manly figures, with a great sword by their side, and six wings folding round them. The heathen goddesses would please me as little. Your friend is less severe than Minerva, more decent than Venus, less cold than Diana, and not quite so great a vixen as the ox-eyed Juno. To express that infallible mixture of grace, sweetness, and dignity, a new race of beings must be invented, and I am a mere prose narrator of matter of fact. Bess is much nearer the level of a mortal, but a mortal for whom the wisest man, historic or medical, would throw away two or three worlds, if he had them in his possession. From the aforesaid Bess I have received three marks of kind remembrance; from the foot of St Bernard, with an exquisite monument of

art and friendship; from Turin; and finally from Milan, with a most valuable insertion from the duchess. At birds in the air it is difficult to take aim, and I fear or hope that I shall sustain some reproaches on your not finding this long epistle at Florence. I will mark it No. 1; and why should I despair of my future [] since I can say with truth, that since your departure I have not spent so agreeable a morning? To each of the dear little Caro's pray deliver nine kisses for me, which shall be repaid on demand. My best compliments to Mr Pelham, if he is with you.

No. CLXXXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, April 24th, 1793.

HAD I not given previous notice of my own unworthiness, the plea of being an old incorrigible offender would serve only to aggravate my guilt; it is still sufficiently black, and I can patiently hear every reproach, except the cruel and unjust imputation of having forgotten my fair friends of the Arno and the Tyber. They would indeed have been less present to my thoughts, had I maintained a regular *weekly* correspondence; since, by the effect of my negligence, not a *day* has elapsed without a serious, though fruitless, resolution of writing by the very next post. What may have somewhat contributed, besides original sin, to this vile procrastination, is the course of events that has filled this abominable winter. As long as the poor king's fate was in suspense, one waited from post to post, between hope and fear; and when the blow was struck, even Shakspeare's language was inadequate to express our grief and indignation. I have never approved the execution of Charles the first; yet Charles had invaded, in many respects, the ancient constitution of England.

and the question had been judged in the field of Naseby before it was tried in Westminster-hall. But Louis had given and suffered everything. The cruelty of the French was aggravated by ingratitude, and a life of innocence was crowned by the death of a saint, or, what is far better, of a virtuous prince, who deserves our pity and esteem. He might have lived and reigned, had he possessed as much active courage as he was endowed with patient fortitude. When I read the accounts from home, of the universal grief and indignation which that fatal event excited, I indeed gloried in the character of an Englishman. Our national fame is now pure and splendid; we have nobly stood forth in the common cause of mankind; and although our armaments are somewhat slow, I still persuade myself that we shall give the last deadly wound to the Gallic hydra. The king of Prussia is likewise slow, and your poor friend, the duke of Brunswick, is now not censured but forgotten. We turn our eyes to the prince of Cobourg and his Austrians; and it must be confessed that the deliverance of Holland and Brabant from such a dragon as Dumouriez is a very tolerable employment for the month of March. These blossoms of the spring will be followed, it may be fairly hoped, by the fruits of summer; and in the meanwhile the troubles of Paris, and the revolt of the provinces, may promote, by the increase of anarchy, the restoration of order. I see that restoration through a dark cloud; but if France be lost, the rest of Europe, I believe and trust, will be saved. But amidst the hurricane, I dare not fix my eyes on the *Temple*. So much for politics, which now engross the waking and sleeping thoughts of every feeling and thinking animal. In this country we are tranquil, and I believe safe, at least for this summer; though peace has been purchased at some expense of national honour, of the old reputation of Swiss courage; we have crouched before the tiger, and stroked him till

he has sheathed his claws, and ceased for a moment to roar. My journey to England this year must depend on the events of the campaign; as I am fully resolved rather to remain quiet another autumn and winter in my sweet habitation, than to encounter the dangers of the sea and land. I envy the pleasures which you and your companions have enjoyed at Florence and Rome; nor can I decide which have tasted the most perfect delight, those to whom such beauties were new, or those to whom they were familiar. A fine eye, correct judgment, and elegant sensibility, are requisite to qualify the studious traveller; and these gifts have been liberally dispensed among the Ouchy caravan. But when you have been gratified, though not satiated, with the Hesperian prospect, to what fortunate clime will you direct your footsteps? Have we any hopes of meeting (for my journey, at all events, would be late) in the shades, or rather in the sunshine, of Ouchy? Should Mount Cenis be still imperious, you have trampled on St Bernard in a more rigorous season; and whatsoever may be the state of the world, the Pays de Vaud will afford you a secure asylum, or a pleasant station. I rejoice to hear of lady Besborough's improvement. Will that new title make any difference in the plan? Is the duchess very impatient to revisit England? Except some trifling considerations of children, &c. all countries may be indifferent to her, as she is sure of being loved and admired in all. I am anxious and impatient to learn the result of your counsels; but I feel myself unworthy of a regular correspondence, and am not desirous of heaping fresh coals of fire on my head.

I am happy to find that you forgive and pity my friend Necker, against whom you all entertained some Versailles prejudices. As his heart has been always pure, he cannot feel remorse; but as his conduct has been unsuccessful, he is penetrated with grief and regret. Madame de Staël has written to me from England;

she likes the country, but means to fly over again in May.

No. CLXXXV.

MR GIBBON TO LORD LOUGHBOROUGH.

MY LORD,

* Rolle, February 23d, 1793.

I do not merely congratulate your lordship's promotion to an office† which your abilities have long deserved. My satisfaction does not arise from an assurance of the wisdom and vigour which administration will derive from the support of so respectable an ally. But as a friend to government in general, I most sincerely rejoice that you are now armed in the common cause against the most dangerous fanatics that have ever invaded the peace of Europe; against the new barbarians who labour to confound the order and happiness of society, and who, in the opinion of thinking men, are not less the enemies of subjects than of kings. The hopes of the wise and good are now fixed on the success of England; and I am persuaded that my personal attachment to your lordship will be amply gratified by the important share which your councils will assume in that success. I could wish that some of your former associates possessed sufficient strength of mind to extricate themselves from the toils of prejudice and party. But I grieve that a man, whom it is impossible for me not to love and admire, should refuse to obey the voice of his country; and I begin to fear that the powerful genius of Mr Fox, instead of being useful, will be adverse to the public service. At this momentous crisis we should enlist our whole force of virtue, ability, and spirit; and without any view to his private advantage,

* A town between Lausanne and Geneva, where M. Necker then resided.

† Lord Loughborough had lately been appointed lord high chancellor. S.

I could wish that our friend lord * * * * * might be properly stationed in some part of the line.

Mr Necker, in whose house I am now residing on a visit of some days, wishes me to express the sentiments of esteem and consideration which he entertains for your lordship's character. As a friend to the interest of mankind, he is warmly attached to the welfare of Great Britain, which he has long revered as the first, and perhaps as the last, asylum of genuine liberty. His late eloquent work, *Du Pouvoir Exécutif*, which your lordship has assuredly read, is a valuable testimony of his esteem for our constitution; and the testimony of a sagacious and impartial stranger may have taught some of our countrymen to value the political blessings which they have been tempted to despise.

I cherish a lively hope of being in England, and of paying my respects to your lordship, before the end of the summer; but the events of the year are so uncertain, and the sea and land are encompassed with so many difficulties and dangers, that I am doubtful whether it will be practicable for me to execute my purpose.

I am, my lord, most respectfully, and your lordship will permit me to add most affectionately, your most faithful humble servant,

EDWARD GIBBON.

[THE following letters were addressed to lord Sheffield on his publication of the Miscellaneous Works of Mr Gibbon, including the contents of these volumes. They are retained, as briefly and ably descriptive of the merits of his Life and Correspondence.—*Editor of Autobiography.*]

No. CLXXXVI.

REV. DR COOKE, DEAN OF ELY, AND PROVOST OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

MY DEAR GOOD LORD,

April 26th, 1796.

THE precious volumes have safely reached us, and shall be deposited *pari jure*, or cheek by jole, with the six which we have long possessed, and to which they make so very valuable an appendix. I am at a loss indeed to say, whether the great Historian of empires, and of the changes and chances of the world in general, may be of more use and consequence than the faithful narrator, as he appears in your lordship's representation, of the humbler incidents of private life, of the occasional reflections that arise upon them, and the happiness of a sincere, long-continued, and uninterrupted friendship. The last I am sure come much more closely home to our personal businesses and bosoms, and must have a greater influence on our own immediate conduct; nor can I hesitate to affirm, in an allusion which Mr Gibbon himself, if he could have known the posthumous care and attention to his fame and character, would have applied,

Fortunati ambo !

Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo—

You will go down together to late posterity with as much just distinction as any of the memorable duets of antiquity. While I congratulate your lordship on the close of your meritorious labour for one friend, let me intreat your intercession with lady Sheffield for my not having particularly expressed the high sense I have of the honour of her ladyship's late notice, with which she so obligingly favoured me: nor will it be a slight gratification, if Miss Holroyd may retain any memory of a former admirer, or Miss Louisa of the happiness she communicated by a few transient interviews at Bath. May every blessing attend your lordship, and all who are dear to you! So prayeth most heartily

Your ever most truly obliged and most

Faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM COOKE.

No. CLXXXVII.

THE REV. NORTON NICHOLLS TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

Blundeston, June 2d, 1796

I HAVE delayed so long to write to you, my dear lord, not certainly from indifference to you or to the posthumous fame of Gibbon, which owes so much to your friendly and judicious exertions. The work more than answers my expectation; such a faithful, interesting, and agreeable, portrait of a human mind endowed with the most extraordinary powers, enriched with all the treasures of learning, embellished with all the graces that good taste and polished society can bestow, impelled by an insatiable desire of knowledge to an activity in the pursuit of it, the eagerness and constancy of which has seldom been equalled; such a portrait has scarcely ever been given to the world, and never with such a curious and happy detail. As for his moral character, you have exhibited it in a new point of view *even to me*; till that

admirable letter preceding his last departure from Switzerland, I had no idea of the warmth and energy of his friendship ; but the incomparable letters which you have published teem with proofs most honourable to the heart and sentiments of their author. The account of his studies is as useful as it is singular, and may serve to point out to others the path to literature which so few pursue. Nothing *ran through* his mind ; every subject worthy of attention was sifted, examined, and dissected. The ideas of others produced a new train in him, which he generally carried far beyond the original. The style of his letters is *perfect*,—equally easy, elegant, accurate, pleasant, and even playful. The outline of the History of the World (which I had not seen) is masterly. It was impossible for him to be superficial.

I cannot help congratulating you on having produced a work as honourable to you as to your friend ; and I am convinced that its popularity will be equal to its merit.

Adieu, my dear lord ; believe me to be ever most faithfully yours,
N. NICHOLLS.

No. CLXXXVIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GREGORY LEWIS WAY,
ESQ. TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

Spencer Farm, August 28th, 1796.

I HAVE finished the first volume of the Gibboniana. With parts of it I was delighted and interested extremely. Of his satire on Oxford I can hardly be deemed an *impartial* reader. His opinions on public affairs and public men I swallowed with avidity and approbation. But his French letters of courtship to Deyverdun are delicious indeed, and in the minute incidents connected with his *Work*, I stand invisible behind him ; I steal along his grove of acacias, and my mind participates in his exultation and in his

gloom. Shall I add, that in his honest and manly retirement from public life, and in his estimate of the comparative charms of politics and philosophy, he has also a powerful echo in my bosom? I trust that, like him, I should have been able, in spite of "mes amis, qui ne veulent pas me permettre d'être heureux suivant mon goût et mes lumières," to have persisted in a like line of conduct; since I have his authority for flattering myself that I "possess a disposition somewhat similar to his own." The names of *Chelsum* and *Randolph* I have not forgotten, though I suspect myself of never having read their books.

No. CLXXXIX.

SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ. TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

MY DEAR LORD, Denham Lodge, Sept. 7th, 1796.

I HAVE been in Oxfordshire, and am now in Norfolk, visiting my valuable but unhappy friend Cowper, who, though certainly better than he has been, still continues a victim to melancholy and despair. It is a dreadful sight! Such talents so laid waste by so merciless a disorder claim our pity now, as much as in a different state they before excited our admiration. But it is not the object of this letter to communicate to your lordship those painful sensations which must necessarily be felt by every benevolent mind at hearing of the continued misery this gentleman suffers. It is rather the object of this letter to give you pleasure, who are ever so active in creating and promoting the enjoyment of others

I lately heard from my friend Mr Mackenzie, of Edinburgh, who has distinguished himself in the literary world by his "Man of Feeling," and other ingenious publications. He speaks in the following just and appropriate terms of your lordship's last work, which I transcribe with great satisfaction, as they express my sentiments upon the subject, and as they

come with weight from so distinguished a character as Mr Mackenzie:—

“ With Mr Gibbon’s volumes, particularly the first, I was much entertained and gratified. To see so much of the life and manners of a celebrated man, is always gratifying; in this case it was peculiarly so, from the increased esteem which it excited for that man, by exhibiting him in so amiable a view as a relation and a friend. Lord Sheffield and his family formed a very interesting group in the picture. Among authors and public men it is not very common, and it is very pleasing, to find such continued and warm affection and attachment; and the man of taste, as well as of virtue, is deeply indebted to the editor who can thus unfold to him such sources of moral as well as literary pleasure.”

This is one among many honourable testimonies you have received of the value and importance of your very entertaining publication; a publication which will increase in the good opinion of the public in proportion as they become better acquainted with its contents.

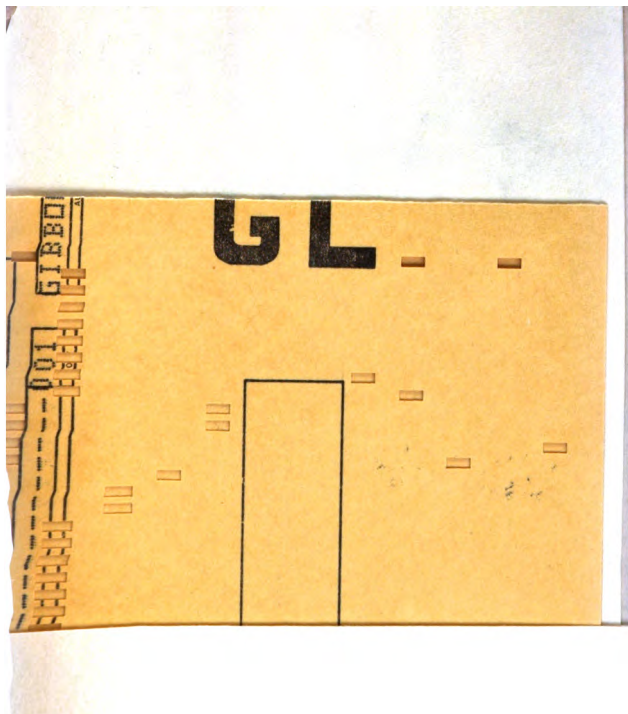
Your lordship’s obliged and affectionate

SAMUEL ROSE.

THE END.

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